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THE GIFT OF  
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*Class of 1897*









# ENGLAND

BY AN OVERSEAS ENGLISHMAN

"If England was what England seems,  
An' not the England of our dreams. . . ."  
—KIPLING.

*Ἡ πατρίς τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἐστίν*

BOSTON AND NEW YORK  
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TO  
AN OVERSEAS ENGLISHWOMAN  
SEPARATED FROM THE MOTHERLAND  
BY THREE CENTURIES OF FOREBEARS  
MY WIFE



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## ENGLAND



# ENGLAND

## CHAPTER I

### ENGLAND'S ZENITH

Time was when it was praise and boast enough  
In every clime and travel where we might,  
That we were born her children.

COWPER.

**F**EW things are sadder in life, not even death itself, than the spectacle of growth which is no longer in harmony with its origins ; a plant, a child, a nation which, affected by secondary and alien elements, its veins charged with morbid virus, increases in bulk, but daily loses the natural character by which we have come to know and perhaps to love it.

All the more poignantly is the sadness felt when it is possible to recall vividly a point in the process of development when the purpose of Nature, were it æsthetic, moral, or wholly utilitarian, seemed to be achieving the ideal. The lovely flower was still true to type, the maiden still graceful and comely, the race still



revealed in thought and action, its fundamental and inherent racial character.

Many of us overseas fancy we saw the Kingdom of England thus in the closing decade of the nineteenth century. Yet amidst the tumult and the vainglory of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, there were clear intimations of a change, for which Mr. Kipling invoked the divine forbearance. It was in that wonderful year, when British patriotism burned almost at fever-heat, that there occurred a debate in a famous London debating club. The theme was, "Has England reached her zenith?" It seemed purely academic: amidst the auguries of a wider and vaster glory, the question could only excite a complacent smile. It was a mere gesture of mock humility. Every one knew—even the so-called Little Englanders knew—that England's Army, England's Navy, England's Empire, England's Commerce, England's Prestige, were in the ascendant.

True, only a couple of years had passed since Lord Rosebery, a brilliant Scotchman, who had unexpectedly acceded to the British Premiership (or, as they said in those days, the Imperial Premiership, so as to distinguish it from the Colonial Premierships), had hugely entertained the politicians by a pointed allusion to England as the "predominant Partner." It had—"predominant partner"—almost the air of a paradox—a happy discovery—and

Englishmen were amused. England had always comprehended Scotland, Wales, and even Ireland. England was even the British Empire and the British Empire was England.\*

England, in those not very remote days, "possessed" Scotland, Wales, and Ireland, as she possessed Canada, Australia, and India. On the map, marked in red, were England's "possessions." On the other hand, it was understood that every Scotchman, Welshman, and Irishman was an Englishman, by courtesy, of course, and as long as he behaved like an Englishman. The privilege was a proud one, and most Scotchmen and Welshmen, and some of the most distinguished Irishmen, behaved. On the Continent there was, until quite recently, little knowledge of, or at least a great carelessness about, these little insular distinctions. Indeed, only four years ago, a Parisian newspaper, *L'Eclair*, published a list of *Anglais célèbres*, containing twenty names, of which six were Scotch, three Irish, two Welsh, two Jewish, and one Dutch Afrikaner. Six only were the names of Englishmen of undiluted English blood.

To return to the debating club in London in 1897: Amongst the company of young men numbering many since greatly distinguished

\* With an Englishman the larger and lesser patriotisms are one. He speaks, for instance, of the English Government and the English Army without condescending to the terms British and Great Britain—not from heedlessness, but from self-concentration.—ROSEBERRY: *Miscellaneous Addresses*.

in the world—at least two have become peers of the realm—was one hailing from a distant Dominion. Full of admiration and pride and even passion for England, the land of his forefathers, as this young man was, yet, seeing what he saw on every hand, aware of the new transforming centripetal forces; the unmistakable trend of the current social and political influences, the New Journalism, the Smart Set, the New Materialism, the Trade Unions, the shifting of the balance of power from the English aristocracy to the British democracy—not merely of Great Britain, but of the whole British Empire, what could he honestly say, when his turn came, but—

*“ Mr. Chairman, there is doubtless much yet in store for the British people—much power, much wealth, much glory. The British Empire will continue to expand, but to-night we are discussing England. I do not think there will be any further ascension of England. England has reached the zenith of her greatness.”*

There it is: as it stands to-day in the minutes of that debating club: the simple statement of the creed of one—I think they were called “Imperialists” in those days—one young Imperialist. But was it not ironic that in that momentarily disconcerted company, in the aristocratic parish of Saint James’s in the capital of England and the seat of the British Empire, the very chairman

should have been of Irish race and two at least of the shocked speakers Scotchmen indignantly denying the declension or even the solstice of England ?

## II

A bare quarter of a century has passed. The novel *credo* has become a truism. There have been political and industrial revolutions ; great wars have been fought and won ; conquests have been made ; territories have been added ; the British Empire, a troubled and uncertain monster, increases in stature and breadth, if not in power. But where to-day stands *England* ? Who to-day amongst the children of men thinks and speaks of England as a former generation spoke of her ? Is she to-day even the "predominant partner" ? In what circles, foreign or domestic, political, diplomatic, industrial or administrative, do Englishmen predominate ? They see, as Mr. Bernard Shaw has lately reminded them, the British Empire being "run by Scotch brains, Welsh brains, Irish brains, Jewish brains," while the Englishman relapses more and more into the rôle of figure-head.

The world is moving on to unknown goals. Two once-mighty guides and leaders of civilization are being shouldered aside by an impatient generation pressing on hurriedly : the Christian religion and the Kingdom of England. No

intelligent man can shut his eyes to the fact that both are now ceasing to exert their pristine influence on universal life and opinion. It is immaterial that the numbers of both lieges and devotees were never nominally greater ; but it now needs the new art of Propaganda to discover and celebrate the political power of England, unorthodox Church dignitaries to defend the true unity of the Church, and intensive analysis of the 1921 Census statistics to ascertain the whereabouts of Englishmen of undiluted English blood.

Yet there are still in England some millions of this reticent and retiring race, and these have had leisure of late to reflect that their Prime Minister was a Welshman ; that the Leader of the great English armies in the great world-war was a Scotchman ; the Captain of their great Navy an Irishman ; the Leader of the House of Commons an Irish-Canadian ; the Foreign Minister a Scotchman ; their late Chief-Justice (now the British Ruler of India) a Jew. In the administration of the Empire which England founded and long ruled, scarce a third are now Englishmen.

What choice had Englishmen in the selection of those who, in conjunction with Marshal Foch, dictated to Germany the terms of the Armistice ? These were :

Mr. Lloyd George (Welsh)

Mr. Bonar Law (Scotch)

Lord Reading (Jew)

Mr. Balfour, Sir Eric Geddes, Field Marshal  
Haig, and Admiral Wemyss (Scotch)  
Lord Milner.

If one might dare to delve into the recesses of an Englishman's mind, somewhere in England there might be found patriotic, passionate devotees, mentally apostrophizing their country as William Ernest Henley apostrophized her :

Ever the faith endures,  
England, my England :—  
Take and break us : we are yours,  
England, my own.

Or perhaps recalling an England which stood on its own Anglo-Saxon bedrock, fused and unified and consistent with its elements ; when Englishmen only dwelt in England—an England which invented Parliamentary institutions and gave its language and laws to its island partners, which sailed its own navies and argosies, which produced its immortal English literature : the England which taught honour and manliness, deportment and kindness, fairplay and toleration to a world which has scarce yet half-learnt these English lessons.

### III

The cause of the declension of Rome was the overlaying of the national by the Imperial character. England, who has given so much, who has spent herself in the service of the

world, is now destined to receive. And how many there are who are ready to assist the "weary Titan," to seat themselves in the seats of the mighty; to buy and break up the estates of the class which made England great, to relieve them of their books, pictures, and heirlooms, to transact their affairs, deck themselves with their titles, belong to their exclusive clubs—see them pressing forward to crush the Englishness out of social England. Forty pages each week in *Country Life* alone of announcements of ancestral mansions for sale.

England to-day is suffering from blood poisoning. The nation is not organically unsound. She is sick because she is not herself: there is far too great an infusion of foreign matter in her blood. She seeks seclusion, unity with herself. Beneath all the crudity and vulgarity, ugliness and unrest which disfigure London and the English towns, there is a soul in travail. It is, because of the very depth of its distress, strangely inarticulate. If it find expression, it is rarely in the public press, or in the utterances of the jaunty and successful politicians who alone seem to have the public ear; but you may catch notes of the national anguish in occasional speeches or letters to *The Times* of the responsible heads of the old English families. Or perhaps in the guardedly ironic deliverances of Dean Inge. Listen closer, and you may find that the heart-cry is not confined to the

dukes faced with the necessity for quitting their ancestral palaces or the nobles horrified at Mr. Lloyd George's surrender to Ireland. You may surprise it in the decorous seclusion of the homes of the real English, who, in hall or hamlet, have somehow managed to keep themselves and their manners, and ideals—aye, and their sorrows, to themselves. They are not parading the sacrifice of their young manhood throughout Europe. Their one passionate desire is to be themselves—to be English.\* It is noticeable that the blood-red Cross of St. George floats oftener now from the tower of the English Church, even though St. Matthew and faith in the Bloody Atonement command less fervour within.

#### IV

Has England as a separate homogeneous race and nation really spent herself? She no longer "possesses" anything, but is herself

\* Mr. Thomas Hardy recently wrote: "I congratulate the members of the St. George's Society upon their wise insistence on the word 'English' as the name of this country's people, and in not giving way to a few short-sighted clamourers for the vague, unhistoric and pinchbeck title of 'British,' by which they would fain see it supplanted."

One thing I do absolutely stick at—using the word "Britisher" or "Briton." I would write a whole column rather than have to use such barbarisms. Instead of saying there was a gathering of Frenchmen and Britons (or Britishers) I would much prefer saying, there was a gathering of Frenchmen and Scotchmen, Welshmen, Irish, Canadian, Australian, South Africans and Englishmen. But I always like, when I can, to get myself into a position when I can use the dear old words, "England," "English," and "Englishmen." They mean so much to us.—SIR FRANCIS YOUNGHUSBAND.



possessed. She has fulfilled literally her part of the bargain imposed by the Union, and in humility and self-effacement has wiped herself off the world's map. Under an appellation of magnitude, which mocks at her racial origins and her geographical dimensions, she is now again but the southern half of Great Britain. Foreigners, at first, would have none of the change; they were not to be seduced by the resounding United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, when they knew they were dealing with England and the English. The great armies which Britain and the British Empire lately put into the field were always to them *l'armée Anglaise*. In the official British reminders issued from time to time from British General Headquarters that *l'armée Britannique* was the correct denomination, they long suspected some occult significance lurked. It was not till 1919 that—but I will come to that in a moment.

Foreigners have always shown a profound ignorance of England: but never did they reach such depths as when, three years after the Armistice, they imagined that England had become exalted and enriched and strengthened as a result of the Great War. The callowest and shallowest clerk in any department in Whitehall could have told them that in no country in the universe, in no nation of the British Empire has England not lost disastrously in cash, in power, in prestige. The very

Dominions she founded and upheld for generations at her own charge resent the very suggestion of English interference, political, moral, social, or economic. To them England is a nation sunk to their own level and her very hegemony is in dispute. In Canada a statesman of Scotch succeeds one of Irish descent. The alternative is a Quebec Frenchman. In Australia the Prime Minister is a Welshman. The Prime Minister of New Zealand is an Irishman. The Prime Minister of South Africa is of Dutch descent.

In India the very name of Englishman is resented, not, I hasten to remark, by the native intelligentsia, but by the British official hierarchy, and it was lately urged, not altogether unreasonably, that the title of the famous Calcutta Newspaper, *The Englishman*, was inappropriate and should be changed, now that Indian administration is so largely in the hands of the Scotch, the Irish, and the Jews.

"Britain" has triumphed at last, and the term "English" will soon cease to have little more political significance than Norman or Saxon, and may, in time to come, be only the historical name of the eclectic tongue read or spoken or understood by a third of the human race.

## V

In the month of June 1919, in an ante-room of the Hôtel Majestic, Paris, which was the

headquarters of the British delegates, the present writer chanced upon a scrap of paper. It was a printers' proof—the fragment of an article, despatch, memorandum, rescript, circular or what-not, possibly of high Imperial import. Certain words had been vigorously deleted—and the corrections were penned in the unmistakable hand of a distinguished Imperial statesman. Thus :

*the British Empire*  
nor can ~~England~~ accede to principles which are  
so opposed to ~~her~~ *its Imperial* national interests and to  
~~English~~ *British* traditions as to constitute a

Such was all of the fragment that matters ; it was rather the circumstances, the surrounding clash at Versailles of falling and of rising nationalities, which lent it epical significance. To one, a man from overseas, separated from his English forbears by several generations, accustomed from childhood to regard England in historical perspective, this second " scrap of paper " of the War bore implications far more fateful than the first for that nation which had founded and for so long dominated the British Empire and directed the destinies of the British race.

## CHAPTER II

### THE ENGLISH PARLIAMENT

Where shall the watchful Sun  
Match the master-work you've done,  
England, my own ?

HENLEY.

*Confucius* : You will not believe me ; and I do not blame you for it ; but England once saved the liberties of the world by inventing Parliamentary Government, which was her peculiar and supreme glory.—BERNARD SHAW : *Back to Methuselah*.

**I**F it were possible for the botanist to ascertain how the form and colour, the bark and fibre, the leaf and fruit of the oak became differentiated from the primordial vegetable growth from which all trees sprang ; to describe to us the influence and tendencies, the mysterious impulsions from within, the conditions without which stimulated its sap and permanently affected its nature—then we should watch those processes with interest not lessened, but rather increased, by the demonstration that the first oak was of puny height and girth, with undeveloped foliage, and not yet the giant whose benign foliage sheltered and refreshed the traveller.

Eleven centuries have passed since the

various Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms in Britain were united by Egbert and were given the name of "Engla-land." The name in its Latin form was sanctioned and adopted by the Church, and the national title of the *Angli* became general, while that of the Saxons disappeared save amongst the Welsh and the Irish, in whose tongue the term *Sassenach* still survives.

But centuries before this fusion the aboriginal British had vanished from England. After the fateful battle of Deorham in A.D. 577 there was no sign of British or of Roman life. To the Welsh chronicler, Gildas, the land of the English is "a foreign land and its people a foreign people."

Small as the population was, probably less than a million, England was already homogeneous.

The oak sapling of pre-Conquest days was the authentic oak and no other tree of the forest. As it grew it absorbed, assimilated, and magnified : but its fundamental character was what we understand as Anglo-Saxon, just as it is Anglo-Saxon to-day.

The peculiar value of a nation is, after all, the sum of its special qualities—its inherent and acquired characteristics, its ethos. And so England is older, morally and spiritually and organically, than her Parliament. It is in vain for certain perverse modern historians to deny the title of Englishman to Alfred the Great, and to pour lofty scorn on "the crude

Teutonism which saw in the Anglo-Saxon period the Golden Age of English nationality, and pictured before the Norman Conquest a free-self-governing people combining the vigour of primitive virtue with the perfection of radical principles." \*

No one, in these days, inclines to a defence of "crude Teutonism." Yet if we hold that Freeman and Sharon Turner and Stubbs and J. R. Green were in no error in believing that England was homogeneous long before the twelfth century, that a national state is something broader and deeper than monarchical centralization; that national unity is, in Mr. Pollard's own phrase, "a thing of the spirit rather than a territorial expression or a mechanical matter of administration," then a great many of us must continue "crude and unrepentant Teutonists." †

The English spirit was instinct in the English people long before the process of national unity, and national consciousness was completed under Edward I. and his immediate

\* A. F. Pollard.

† It was in these tiny knots of husbandmen that the men from whom Englishmen were to spring learned the worth of public opinion, of public discussion, the worth of the agreement, the "common sense," the general conviction to which discussion leads, as of the laws which derive their force from being expressions of the general conviction. . . . Talk is persuasion and persuasion is force, the one force which can sway freemen to deeds such as those which have made England what she is. The "talk" of the village moot, the strife and judgment of men, giving freely their own rede and setting it as freely aside for what they learn to be the wiser rede of other men, is the groundwork of English history.—J. R. GREEN: *The Making of England*.

successors. A community can exist and flourish, and even exert a profound influence, irrespective of political organization, as is apparent in the case of the Jews.

Institutions without men are, we are reminded, as futile as men without institutions. Before race can be a rational object for patriotism, there must exist a *traditional genius*, handed down by inheritance or by adoption. And again, the spirit of a race is a mythical entity expressing the individual soul in its most constant and profound instincts.

## II

Two centuries of growth and consolidation followed the fusion under Egbert, and then the race of Englishmen had to meet the invasion of the Normans, the ethnic effect of which was mitigated by the fact that the actual number of the conquerors was few, and that these only spoke, but were not, French. Slowly the English began to recover their national spirit, being helped by a reaction of the Normans upon their own Teutonic origins. We mark their assimilation to the English temper and moral nature during the twelfth and the immediately succeeding centuries. Writing in 1385 the chronicler, Trevisa, notes that "in all the grammar scoles of Engeland children leveh Frensche and construeth and lerneth on Englische," and already

the English genius was revealing itself in the writings of Gower, Lydgate, and Chaucer, that "perpetual fountain of good sense," who, in spite of his French culture, remained so uncompromisingly English in his moral and spiritual outlook and so little of the courtier in the democratic sympathies. The English race, by this time, had begun its world-mission, and the English Parliament was gathering up and drawing closer the threads of English national life.

If Egypt has given to the civilized world its alphabet ; Syria and the far east its religion ; Greece its standard of art and literature ; the Moors its algebra, and Rome its laws ; to England alone are due its political organization and constitutional systems. The English Parliament is the Mother and exemplar of Congress and Assembly, Reichstag and Duma, Cortes and Diet, Rikstag and Storting, Sobranje and Meiljiss, and all other representative parliaments, however indigenous they appear, of the modern world.\*

Even granting that there is hardly a word or a phrase in the law and custom of the English Constitution that is Anglo-Saxon in origin, how far does this carry us into the heart of the matter ? The science of statecraft was unknown to the early English : when it became known and practised, a political terminology followed, borrowed from the Latin or the

\* Pollard : *The Evolution of Parliament.*



French. It is triumphantly pointed out that "in the much-vaunted English political phrase 'Liberty of the subject,' the only English words are the preposition and the article." Well, our Anglo-Saxon ancestors did not have the word "liberty," but had they not "freedom"?

A ! Fredome is a noble thing !  
Fredome all solace to man giffis,  
He lives at ease that frely livis ! \*

The English were no strangers to sheep-flesh before it was called mutton. In place of court and council they had the moot, and as for choosing their leaders and making their decisions, they could do this as effectively as if they had "voted" by oyster-shells or potsherds or—in modern times—by ballots.

Granting that the Englishman borrowed his political terminology from the French, he already possessed what his neighbour lacked—the qualities to vitalize and make real the things which the imported terms represented, and to give them back as living, working, beneficent institutions. The design may have been Norman-French, but the metal issued and was supplied from the mine of the English character, and it was not until it was adapted and perfected in England that it became sterling currency.

That there must have been something different in the English character which made

\* John Barbour, 1316-95.

it receptive to certain ideals and rules of government is shown by the long subsequent failure of these elsewhere : and there are still great communities exhibiting great capacity for thought and culture which have not yet found themselves able to use to the highest advantage the instruments and the institutions which England has forged.

## III

It may be that the English Parliamentary system, which has conferred such benefits upon the world and contributed so much to human civilization and progress, is now out-living its usefulness. Carlyle was not the first to revolt against its inefficacy in handling vigorously the problems of statesmanship. Certainly this one Victorian philosopher—albeit not an Englishman—could envisage the failure of Parliament and lament its inability to decide to execute with the promptitude and inexorability of an autocrat—precisely those qualities which the English dislike and are deficient in most. A more recent critic seriously expresses his doubt whether the doctrine of Parliamentary sovereignty in any form that means much can long survive the triumph of democracy. . . . “When the Referendum really comes, the sovereign Parliament must go.” \*

\* McIlwain, *The High Court of Parliament*.

Parliament has served the English people for eight centuries, and out of it has grown the party system of government. Although used by kings and ministers as a means of oppression, it has been, on the whole, a more efficient mill to grind the legislative corn than any devised during that period, and it may be claimed for it that, in virtue of its constitution and its character as a national safety-valve, it has not only assisted in the unification of the British people, but it has made that people the best-governed and most law-abiding in history.

With the growth of England's Empire, Parliament did not commit the mistake of attempting too much. It was plainly seen that if the offshoot communities were to re-act more readily to their own varying needs, they must be given machinery of their own of the same pattern.

These overseas parliaments have gradually succeeded in drawing all real power of government to themselves, leaving to the original Mother Parliament the academic discussion of questions of world policy without any power to bind a single self-governing Colony. These Colonies are now, in all essentials, free and independent nations.

The only bonds which keep the "Commonwealth of Nations which constitute the British Empire" (to quote from a recent King's Speech) are the English speech; a certain race-consciousness: a common allegiance to the

King of England, and a common flag ; an acceptance of the appellate jurisdiction of the Privy Council in high judicial matters, and an acquiescence in the system by which Englishmen and not Colonials are selected as representative of the Crown in the Dominions.

The British Parliament has now little more to do with the affairs of the Dominions than has the Manx House of Keys, and amongst the representatives of the Overseas nations the British Prime Minister is to-day merely *primus inter pares*. The British race, scattered all over the world, has travelled thus far on the road to its ultimate destiny. The great, the reassuring fact is that it is still a parallel road—because, although local conditions differ, the language, the laws, the standards of all the peoples of all the commonwealths of British origin, are English ; whether prevalent in Capetown, or Sydney, or Ottawa.

But with the accession to self-governing status of India and the Crown Colonies, for how long it will be possible to continue to speak of the British Parliament as an Imperial Parliament depends solely upon the rate of the process of devolution.\*

Parliament has changed its character. The old English tradition of unpaid public service

\* As an Indian Nationalist has pointed out, an Empire containing 300 millions of Indians and 60 millions of white men with equal rights will not be a white Empire but an Indian Empire.—WILLIAMSON : *British Expansion*.

has there disappeared. The hereditary principle in the House of Lords, the last survival of feudalism, may shortly disappear ; the proportion of the direct representatives of democracy will be increased and the way paved for demagogues and perhaps a dictator.

England must operate her own constitutional mechanism or cease to be English. That mechanism threatens to be fatally clogged by British cosmopolitanism. The High Court of Parliament may get out of order : and be exchanged for the Referendum. But whatever system be adopted, it must be an instrument for expressing the will of the English people. Always behind their expressed will has been the national character : and the life force of character is the spirit—the unchangeable *ethos* of a race, which, no more than the Jewish, can escape from its origins.

“ The movements of nations,” as Buckle rightly divined, “ are perfectly regular, and, like all other movements, are solely determined by their antecedents.”

## CHAPTER III

### ENGLAND'S EXPANSION

Not the lone desert can the traveller know  
Where, great of soul, thy children have not wrought ;  
Far as the deathless mind hath hewn its way  
Toiling have reached thy caravans of thought :  
England—All hail !

THOMAS REDCAM.

In every department of modern western civilization the English have assisted as pioneers, and one only need read Lessing, Goethe, or Kant to know how much our own culture owes to Anglo-Saxon impulse.—DR. CARL PETERS.

He had faith in England and in her absolutely—in her pride and power—in her virtue, benevolence and philanthropy, in her expansiveness and tenacity, in her Imperial destiny. In fine, of him it may be written, he was a true Englishman!—SIR R. TEMPLE of SIR JOHN HAWLEY GLOVER.

**P**ARLIAMENTARY government, then, is, as we see, not England's greatest gift to the world, but only a manifestation of a far more potent quality which is England's real glory and the secret of her greatness.

The distinctive elements of the English character were present and active centuries before Chaucer illustrated them in the first great English literature. Of the nature of the Anglo-Saxon Lowell says that " his genius is

his solidity, an admirable foundation of national character. . . . You cannot move him ; he and rich earth have a natural power of cohesion." He is "not quarrelsome, but with indefatigable durability of fight in him." His honesty and simplicity are dwelt upon, together with that "dogged sense of justice" and that "equilibrium of thought which springs from clear-sighted understanding" which makes "the beauty of the Saxon nature."

From the Conquest until the Reformation England is seen in process of consolidating herself and endeavouring to throw off, or else absorb, any and all of the alien influences which were attempting to direct or alter the course of the national life.

As Mr. Kipling in his luminous summary of the history of the "True-born Englishman" for five hundred years reminds us :

"his affairs, domestic and foreign, were controlled by French, Italian, Spanish, with occasional Austrian, politico-ecclesiastical authorities, who tried to teach him that 'this realm of England' was but part of a vast international organization destined to embrace, protect, and instruct all mankind. He escaped from those embraces, only to find himself subjected to the full rigours of the Puritan Conscience, which at that time was largely directed by gentlemen from Geneva, Leyden, Amsterdam, and the Low Countries. While

thus engaged he was, under pretext of union, finally and fatally subjugated by the Scot."

The "imperturbable tolerance" of the Englishman is, in this summary, especially emphasized. He is, according to Mr. Kipling:

"like a built-up gun-barrel—all one temper though welded of many different materials—and he has strong powers of resistance. Roman, Dane, Norman, Papist, Cromwellian, Stuart, Hollander, Hanoverian, Upper Class, Middle Class, Democracy—each in turn through a thousand years experimented on him and tried to make him to their own liking. He met them each in turn with a large, silent toleration, which each in turn mistook for native stupidity. He gave them each in turn a fair trial, and when he had finished with them, an equally fair dismissal."

Even though we grope blunderingly for its expression in words, each in his own way, we all know in what consists the English spirit. Foreigners are often happiest in their analyses, and amongst many tributes that of Mr. George Santayana, a Spaniard, writing in English, grapples with the central truth. He speaks of one gift or talent, native to England: the "spirit of free co-operation." The root of it is free individuality, which is deeply seated in the English inner man; there is an indomitable instinct or mind in him which he perpetually



consults and reverts, slow and embarrassed as his expression of it may be.

“ Yet this slow co-operation of free men, this liberty in democracy, is wholly English in its personal basis, its reserve, its tenacity, its empiricism, its public spirit, and its assurance of its own rightness, and *it deserves to be called English always, to whatever countries it may spread.*”

“ The general instinct,” he further explains, “ is to run and help, to assume direction, to pull through somehow by mutual adaptation and by seizing on the readiest practical measures and working compromises.”

We are told that

“ English liberty is a method, not a goal. It is related to the value of human life very much as the police are related to public morals, or commerce to wealth ; and it is no accident that the Anglo-Saxon race excels in commercial as distinguished from the artistic side of industry, and having policed itself successfully it is beginning to police the world at large. It is all an eminence of temper, goodwill, reliability, accommodation.”

And again, the philosopher from whom I am quoting finds that most of the concrete things which English genius has produced are expedients. Its spiritual treasures are hardly possessions, except as character is a possession ;

they are rather a standard of life, a promise, an insurance. . . . Even English law and Parliaments would be "very unjustly judged if judged as practical contrivances only; they satisfy at the same time the moral interest people have in uttering and enforcing their feelings."

And finally,

"without the English spirit, without the faculty of making themselves believe in public what they never feel in private, without the habit of clubbing together and facing facts and feeling duty in a cautious, consultative, experimental way, English liberties forfeit their practical value."

## II

England was not always without race consciousness. There was even once a time when race consciousness implied humiliation, when, as Macaulay reminded us, a common form of indignant denial amongst the Norman ruling classes was, "Do you take me for an Englishman?" But the pride in nationality again burst forth with the first French wars, and the utterances of kings and courtiers in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries are not far removed from vainglory, and probably the body of the nation, with increasing freedom, actually felt a superiority over other nations,

and not indisposed to try conclusions with them. But the time was hardly ripe for any national assertion that was not directly connected with royal policy until after the rise of the Tudor navy.

From the first, in consequence of her insular situation, England possessed maritime facilities. Yet for nearly two centuries after the Conquest Englishmen had little share in the English sea-borne trade. Why was this? One reason was that this commercial intercourse was the virtual monopoly of foreign merchants, who were veterans in their craft, and were fully trained and organized. The Hansa merchants were so powerful that no English king dared offend them.

Whether the English were ever really, in bone and fibre, a maritime race, looking upon the sea as their proper element, is a matter which it were more prudent to leave to the English poets. But a moderate familiarity with the annals of such seafolk as the Scandinavians, the Genoans, the Portuguese, and the Dutch \* must temper our exaltation of the English as natural "sea-rovers."

There is a saying of a blunt English admiral, the late Lord Fisher, that Englishmen as a rule were naturally indifferent sailors and by no means fond of the sea—"it was sheer

\* Most English seafaring terms are borrowed from the Dutch, as deck, mast, sail, boom, bow, taffrail, schooner, sloop, yacht, skipper, wharf, etc.

spirit which turned them into good seamen." In spite of the exploits of a long line of illustrious mariners, it is probable that the secret of the success of England's merchant marine, and of the British Navy itself, is to be found less in an inherent partiality of Englishmen for the sea than in commercial needs and political expediency. One may even hold that the bulk of the nation was rather in agreement with that typical Englishman, Samuel Johnson, whose "abhorrence of the profession of a sailor was uniformly violent."

It must not be forgotten, also, that for centuries the bulk of the English dwelt as far inland as possible—that all their great towns were in the interior, and that nine-tenths of the people never set eyes upon salt water in all their lives. It would be far truer to say that the Danes, the Norsemen, and the Bretons were essentially sea-faring peoples, and it is probably from that strain in the English blood that the English sea-lovers and sea-rovers sprang.

Be this as it may, in maritime adventure and discovery England in the critical fifteenth and sixteenth centuries took a place behind the Italians, the Portuguese, and the Dutch, and although English merchants profited by their enterprise and in time succeeded in wresting from them many, if not most, of their oversea prizes, the mainspring of English action was to be found in the Royal Exchange and the

counting-houses of Leadenhall Street. As one historian sums up, the English were for centuries unlearned in scientific navigation and had to buy their experience.

### III

When we come, however, to compare the use to which England put her maritime enterprise, the results which she obtained from the oversea lands upon which she first set her foot, we perceive her incontestable superiority. When the national genius of the people was allowed free exercise, uncramped and unhindered, commerce and colonization flourished. Sent to dwell abroad, an Englishman left to himself, thrown upon his own resources, soon found a definite and durable plan of life. Robinson Crusoe is the prototype of the colonizing Englishman. He proceeds to adapt his surroundings to himself, rather than himself to his surroundings. There never was a race in whom customs and habits and ideas fitted so closely as a garment, or a people so impatient of change when it was forced upon them from without and against their will.

When, therefore, the Englishman found himself early in the seventeenth century, voluntarily, or by necessity, thrust out from the shores of England, he tacitly resolved that there should be no break in the continuity of his habits and customs. He would take

England with him—her laws, her code, and her prestige—and not distance nor duration of exile should affect his *Englishism*. In such wise he was assisting in the expansion of England.

Our great Empire poet has suggested that “if the domestic situation became too much for the Englishman, he could always take a sloop and go to sea and there seek or impose the peace which the Papal legate or mediæval trade union or profligate chancellor of the exchequer denied to him at home. Following this idea, the Empire was the outcome of the relaxation of persecuted specialists—men who, for one cause or another, were unfit for the rough-and-tumble life at home. They did it for change and rest, exactly as we used to take our summer holidays, and, like ourselves, they took their national habits with them.”

One of the advantages of this process was the freedom from that nostalgia from which the French, the Italian, and the Irish emigrant suffered. The early colonists in Virginia or Barbados, taking the solidarity of the Empire for granted, were soon duplicating the institutions of England, even though the Puritans of Massachusetts had instincts and principles of their own, which they put above those of the Mother Country. From the first, none were conscious of more inferiority than any English provincial feels towards the society of the Metropolis. Above all, the English traits of

self-reliance and fair-play were apparent in the whole of this business of colonization.

The Puritans—it should be said here—represented an element which was not English—an element dormant, untouched by the influences which had everywhere moulded the English character. It was that residue which could not be absorbed—of racial traits which defied assimilation. On this hypothesis both Puritanism and Roman Catholicism are atavistic.

Thus in the rise of the Puritans we have a clear indication of the presence of a foreign body in the English blood—a body having the characteristics of another nationality. Curiously enough, the rise of the Puritans coincides with the accession of a Scot to the English throne and the prevalence of Scotsmen at court.

The history of the next fifty years is the history of an attempt on the part of England to return to her origins—to expel the unassimilable ingredients of her national life—by the usual methods of nature—emigration and wars.

#### IV

When a German asked, less than a generation ago :

“ From what special quality does the Empire-building faculty of the English race

really spring? he found that 'the strong sense of individual self-reliance is the most salient.' The system of 'organized liberty' holds sway in every British settlement on the face of the globe. Its formulæ are self-government, down to the smallest units, and government by representation for the whole. The Englishman is opposed to any patronage from above, he must be his own law-giver. But, side by side with this, he is possessed of a strong sense of law and order, without which individualism can never lead to the making of states. This type of man is endowed with a deep respect for the rights of the individual, and this respect is evident in a strong sense of fair play. What is known here as 'fair' is at the bottom of all legislative enactments." \*

There was self-reliance, a sense of fair play: there was also the Englishman's tenacity. He hung on often in what he was told was a losing game, clung to what he won from strand or veld or wilderness in seeming stupidity, reduced by fever, palsied by disease, depressed by solitude, until in the end he or those who came after him reaped the gain and the glory. English colonization is now become a familiar story. Yesterday its brightest chapters were only to be found in the annual reports of Missionary Societies or Chartered Companies. To-day every English child knows something—but he does not know all

\* Dr. Carl Peters: *England for the English*.



of that tale of simple, strenuous persistence, that "carrying on" of which the deeds of Englishmen in the greatest war in history are at once but an amplification and an episode—the glowing tale of England's pioneers in the savage and semi-civilized places of the earth.

Yet, intrinsically and fundamentally the Englishman is no more an ideal colonist than he is the born sailor. His physique and habits have been terribly against him in tropical countries, and the Dutch, the Portuguese, and the French stood the climate far better. But this it was which was said of the Englishman: he never let go his hold.

"The name of Calcutta," writes Sir William Hunter in his *History of British India*, "was identified by our mariners with Golgotha—the place of skulls. Within a decade after Charnock finally landed on the deserted river-bank in 1690 it had become a busy mart, with 1,200 English inhabitants, of whom 460 were buried between the months of August and January in one year. The miseries of the fever-stricken band throughout 1690 and 1691 are not to be told in words."

Whether it was in India, in North America, in Africa, the tragedy went on that was to form England's magnificent epic of overseas colonization. The world is apt to forget now the warnings that went up again and

again to the youth of England: "It is not worth it." "Failure and death are certain." It seemed as if a demon of perversity had seized upon the soul of this island people. I need scarce burden these pages with instances. They began in 1609 and have continued to the present day. There is the tale of the Gold Coast—from which in 1871 even the hardy Dutch had retired for ever. After the Ashanti war, Sir Henry Brackenbury solemnly adjured England to abandon the whole region.

"Why should we retain these possessions, which over and over again Committees of the House of Commons have recommended should be abandoned? No obligation, written or unwritten, actual or moral, exists binding us to protect these races, except this one, that we have for years past accustomed them to look to us for protection and not to rely upon themselves. For what purpose are we going to keep up our possession in this horrible country—to sacrifice, over and over again, if we continue the existing system of government on the Gold Coast, the best and noblest of our English blood at the shrine of a false philanthropy?"

"The English," wrote Herr Solf to Holstein, "are right about Africa, where we have come too late. But *how* is it that they are right? Why is it that their colonial speculations always succeed when other

countries fail? There is something in this that has not yet been satisfactorily explained."

The explanation is probably not that England "worships at the shrine of a false philanthropy." It may be that the shrine is not altogether false. It may be that in the English character is a strong element of altruism—of duty to other peoples, of sympathy with subject peoples.

"We have always had," Mr. Winston Churchill recently told a company of Colonial officials, "in British administration that sense of detachment and of impartiality, that power of comprehending the other man's point of view, that power which is inherent in the governor or administrator, to put himself in the position of the Arab sheik or of the Mashonaland chieftain or the Mahommedan emir of the plains of Kano and to say, 'Let me see, how should I feel if I were in that fellow's place? What is it he really wants? What is his trouble at the present moment? What is the thing that is worrying him?'—and once that point of view is comprehended it is probably quite easy to make arrangements, to make a proposal, to advice a policy, or to take action, which shows the result of a real community of interest between the guiding British power and the native inhabitants of the country. I do not think I can define it better than to say that the first quality of a

British administrator, and an English gentleman, is the power to comprehend the true point—the true and ultimate point of view of the other party and the other side.”

“To dominate the world,” concludes one acute foreign observer, “co-operation is better than policy and empiricism safer than inspiration. Anglo-Saxon imperialism is unintended; military conquests are incidental to it and often not maintained; it subsists by a mechanical equilibrium of habits and interests in which every colony, province, or protectorate has a different status.”

“Co-operation,” “empiricism,” “fair-play,” “tolerance,” “tenacity”—of these qualities are compounded the English spirit which has so influenced the thought, the conduct, and the political boundaries of the world.

## CHAPTER IV

### ENGLAND'S CHARACTER

All who in England's name go forth,  
From East and West, from South and North,  
As our fathers did, full seven times seven ;  
All who go out in England's name,  
Born to o'ercome as our sires o'ercame.

WILLIAM WATSON.

Of all forms of prestige, moral prestige is the most valuable, and no statesman should forget that one of the chief elements of British power is the moral weight that is behind it.—LACKY.

Sur la religion, sur les pouvoirs établis, sur la société et la hiérarchie, sur ce qui est permis ou défendu, sur le bonheur, sur le plaisir et sur les jeux, sur le rôle de l'Angleterre dans le monde, ses idées sont les leurs. Ils sont croyants, ils estiment la théologie, ils honorent la reine, l'aristocratie, l'Eglise d'Angleterre, les institutions, dont les siècles ont fait la dignité ; ils ne discutent point de métaphysique, ni d'art ; ils ne sont pas intellectuels, les idées leurs sont indifférentes, mais ils écrivent des vers grecs, ils savent les "classiques" et l'économie politique. Les questions de gouvernement, l'administration de l'Empire, la politique étrangère, les intéressent. En littérature, en histoire ceux qui travaillent pour un examen se préparent à répondre à beaucoup de questions de fait à montrer qu'ils savent, et non pas à composer un essai ou esquisser une théorie.—CHEVRILLON.

**H**ITHERTO we have been speaking of the English as homogeneous. Yet unity is true rather of the spirit than of society : for we know that the English social system is arranged "in water-tight compartments so constructed that neither the water of popular emotion nor

the fires of private revenge could sweep the ship of State from end to end."

But although those water-tight compartments exist and the occupants have their separate functions, yet for all practical purposes there have been from the beginning but two classes.

Even in that England which made the British Empire and the most effective contributions to world-civilization, there were, strictly speaking, only two classes—not so much noble and plebeian, not even rich and poor, as the rulers and the ruled, the leaders and the led, the small minority and the great majority. True, in England, more than in any other European country, classes and masses were in a perpetual state of flux, each being continually recruited from the other: and the actual direction of public affairs and the practice of those qualities which especially distinguished the English race was the monopoly of a larger class than the philosopher can parallel in the history of any other people. Yet if we were to say that even at the end of the nineteenth century it consisted of one million persons, it would scarce amount to more than three per cent. of the population. This class, comprising the nobility, the gentry, and the cultivated members of the community generally, possessed, and still possesses, characteristics of its own which mark it off in habits, customs, occupations, sharply from the masses of the dwellers

in England. Its solidarity was secured by the operation of a code which foreigners to this day do not understand. To enter the ruling class it was necessary to conform to this code governing the speech, conduct, habits, and apparel of its members, so that the reproach "not quite a gentleman" became a severe handicap to an aspirant. When the aspirant actually succeeded by force of his wealth and talents, any infraction of the code caused the upper social organism to suffer an affront to its sense of solidarity which was bitterly resented.

The distinguishing features of any aristocracy are moral domination, an adventurous spirit, and a firm belief in a system which accords them privilege and priority over the lower orders. An American writer, defining recently a genuine aristocracy, remarks that

"its first and most salient character is its interior security, and the chief visible evidence of that security is the freedom that goes with it—not only freedom in act, the divine right of the aristocrat to do what he jolly well pleases, so long as he does not violate the primary guarantees of his class. The lower orders are inert, timid, inhospitable to ideas, hostile to changes, faithful to a few maudlin superstitions. All progress goes on on the higher levels. . . . It is nothing if it is not autonomous, curious, venturesome, courageous;

and everything if it is. It is the custodian of the qualities that make for change and experiment ; it is the class that organizes danger to the service of the race ; it pays for its high prerogatives by standing in the forefront of the fray."\*

Yet although this ruling class ruled, it was always powerfully, inescapably affected by the bulk of the nation. Always it had to defer to them. No Plantagenet or Tudor monarch, not even the masterful Henry or Elizabeth in the height of their power, however much they might and did flout the nobles, dared oppose the will of the common people. Even weakness itself becomes power when it is backed by the body of the nation.

"In English civilization," Mr. Santayana shrewdly remarks, "the individual is neutralized ; it does not matter so much even in high places if he is rather stupid or cheap ; public spirit sustains him and he becomes its instrument more readily, perhaps, for not being very distinguished or clear-headed in himself."

Not that the common people lack generosity, for as the same philosopher says elsewhere :

"They possess every impulse ; it is experience that they cannot gather, for in gathering it they would be constituting those higher organs that make up an aristocratic society.

\* H. L. Mencken : *Prejudices*, 1921.



Civilization has hitherto consisted in diffusion and dilution of habits arising in privileged centres. It has not sprung from the people ; it has arisen in their midst by a variation from them, and it has afterwards imposed itself on them from above."

In effect, therefore,

"to abolish aristocracy in the sense of social privilege and sanctified authority would be to cut off the source from which all culture has hitherto flowed."

## II

If the English character in general cannot be understood abroad, it is perhaps because it is not understood at home. The conduct and disposition of the English, their tastes and their prejudices, have been misconceived and misrepresented by their own social and political leaders. A Frenchman instinctively understands France : a German understands Germany ; sometimes even an American statesman understands America : but British annals for the past century are full of examples of great men and great parties who failed to understand England.

If one does not possess the secret, what contradictions the English as a race present ! One does not know where to have them. This observer says : they are fundamentally

sentimental ; another that they have laughed their sentimentalists out of court. They are a great commercial country, and yet the least commercially-minded people on earth : a nation of shop-keepers, and a nation of idealists. They are proud, and yet what race shows such humility ? They are not artistic or literary, and yet they have produced the greatest masterpieces of art and literature. No one calls the English witty, and yet their wit is perhaps greater in content than that of any other nation. They are proverbially lazy—yet by the sweat of their brow and the force of their muscle they have altered the face of the planet. Rigid and conservative, no people have run harder and longer after novelty. No wonder that the baffled foreigner fails to understand such inconsistency.

But the English are not really complex : the secret of these inconsistencies is simply the presence of two sharply defined classes in the nation, who, while they share the English spirit, share little else. Both exhibit the results of evolution, but through processes and experiences as different as those to which the race-horse and the cart-horse are subjected.

The Englishman of the class is eager for adventure, restless, full of ideas, domineering, loves war and exercise, and dislikes foreigners. The Englishman in the mass is home-loving, good-natured, rather stupid, intemperate, lazy, fond of vulgar games and excitements,

credulous, dislikes war, and likes foreigners. The one class is insular and inhabited England—the other class inhabited the world, ruled England, and made the British Empire. Yet, singular to relate, the class is merely an extension or development of the mass: and the mass contains within itself the germs of the class.

For nothing is more certain than that in moments of moral crisis the English aristocrat and the English ploughman act exactly the same, and that the way they act is different from the way of the Latin or the Celt, the Teuton and the Slav.

### III

The Great War furnished to two countries—France and England—striking revelations of national misconceptions. The French, with a historic reputation for physical tenuity and spiritual buoyancy, sent legion after legion of corpulent fatalists into the field. I remember standing on a wayside hillock in Picardy noting for a livelong day the marching of infantry and cavalry, and the demeanour of the French troops. They passed in review like the legendary levies of the Covenanters. Sturdy, dour, silent, shambling—they would have justified the metaphor of the pacifist of “sheep being led to the slaughter.” In another part of the countryside the English hosts came

on—horse, foot, and artillery—slender, raw-boned, small, smiling men, vociferous in song. The comparison arose inevitably to the mind—of schoolboys and apprentices released from toil. Yet they were marching to the trenches. Such were the men whose bulk and phlegm had been for centuries contrasted with the dapper vivacity of their Gallic neighbours!

Does this indicate that the English and French have exchanged characters? By no means. It is merely that the popular conception of the enfranchised Englishman is wrong, in that it does not allow for the extraordinary responsiveness to modern conditions of the English masses. The popular misconception in England of the Frenchman is wrong because it does not realize the singular rigidity and maturity of the character of the French masses. The Frenchman has grown up, he is responsible, understands tragedy, and suffering, and death. The Englishman of the masses, as Mr. Bernard Shaw has again lately reminded us, is a child. He is an opportunist. He is irresponsible. He cannot be serious over life because life has not seriously laid her hands on him.

“When I think of the blessings that have been showered on you and contrast them with the poverty, the humiliations, the anxieties, the heartbreak, the insolence and tyranny that were the daily lot of mankind when I was learning to suffer instead of learning to live—

when I see how lightly you take it all, how you quarrel over the crumpled leaves in your beds of roses, how you are so dainty about your work that unless it is made either interesting or delightful to you you leave it . . . I ask myself whether even three hundred years of thought and experience can save you from being superseded by the Power that created you and put you on your trial." \*

Compared with other races, the proletarian of England has not suffered. To-day he hardly knows the meaning of suffering. He has gone without food, but a Frenchman has starved; he has lost his wife and child, but other races are bereaved. The Englishman has been ill-clad, but the Frenchman has gone naked. The Englishman has been oppressed, but other races have been crushed.

It is this historic immunity from tragedy and suffering which has formed the modern Englishman's character. If he has had no depths of experience, he has missed the heights.

Other races have won *Liberty*: he alone for ages has been free. The political freedom he has striven for and gained is nothing compared to his other freedom—the only sure freedom worth having: the freedom from hunger and cold: the freedom from the dungeon, the galleys or the lash, and, better than all, the

\* Bernard Shaw : *Back to Methuselah*.

emancipation from the tyranny of human emotion.

It expresses itself in his face. There are few lines—few marks of care and agony ; of brooding over wrongs, of desire for revenge—such as we see in the faces of Russians and Poles, Frenchmen and Italians. On the other hand, it is now rare to find an English face, amongst the masses, which has the beauty of the spirit—because ease and security mould, but do not chisel, the face, and seldom light the lamp within.

#### IV

As an illustration of the spirit in which the Englishman of the eighteenth century took life, observe the manners of the characters in the *Beggar's Opera*. They are all of the lowest classes : one might say they were all of the criminal classes if one did not realize the unjust severity of the statutes of the period. The severity of those statutes, the poverty and unrest following the Marlborough wars, turned thousands to peculation, prostitution, and violence. It was a cruel time, a time of cold and rags and hardship. As they could not escape from the toils of circumstance these youngsters faced their destiny cheerfully, joked with the constables, made merry with their gaolers, and mounted the scaffold with a ballad or a careless speech, or else set off in the

horrible convict-ships for Barbados or Virginia, true ancestors surely, in spite of their misfortunes, of Wellington's valiant "scum of the earth" or those tens of thousands of young Englishmen who but yesterday cracked jests and chanted ditties in Flanders and the Somme and died like heroes.

"England," confesses Mr. Chesterton, "not only makes her ramparts out of rubbish, but she finds ramparts in what she has herself cast away as rubbish. Some of her best colonies were convict settlements and might be called abandoned convict settlements. The army was largely an army of gaol-birds, raised by goal-delivery; but it was a good army of bad men; nay, it was a gay army of unfortunate men. This is the colour and the character that has run through the realities of English history, and it can hardly be put in a book, least of all a historical book."

Tragedy in no wise touches them—not even at the grim last. Yet these Englishmen were—how different from the historic national prototype! how different from the phlegmatic Pharisee the Continental caricaturists have conjured up!—Englishmen moulded by the forces of their generation. And, too, let us not forget they were Englishmen who were young. Youth is everywhere and amongst all races much the same.

One should always remember, in making

comparisons, many things in the history of France and England, in the story of the lives of Frenchmen and Englishmen, but also one should bear constantly in the forefront of one's mind the distinction of youth from age.

The difference, between the English aristocracy and that of other countries is, first, that it was larger in relation to the masses, and, secondly, that it was for centuries exposed to the infusion of alien elements, ideas, and influences; the absorption of these elements and their assimilation to its own organism. Differing from America, the process of fusion was not so much physical as spiritual, moral, and economic.

Up, then, to about a generation ago, when her capacity for absorption was reached, the measure of England's political prosperity and her social hegemony had been her ability to resist any change in the essential character of English civilization. It might be diluted, but it was not transmuted. It was this tenacity of the ruling classes in England to their national genius which so often saved England in periods of national crisis. It is curious to note how every foreign movement, whether of politics, art, letters, or æsthetics, that came to England, was purged, bowdlerized, and adapted to suit the temperament of the classes. One sees even the advanced English nobles taking from the French Revolution only its humane and

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moral attributes, rejecting in horror all that was extreme, ruthless, and desperate, and presenting to the English democracy a fabric defecated of its brutalities. And how little did the Reform Act of 1832 really affect the condition of the masses or the power and privilege of the classes !

## V

Surveying the English of the first half of the nineteenth century, we see influences which could not fail to affect profoundly the whole nation. One of these was industrialism, which transformed the easy-going, unmethodical English masses into systematic toilers, and created a great foreign and colonial trade. Another was the unexpected moral example of the English Court ; a third was the religious revival, and a fourth was the new public school system.

The English public schools, as Palmerston once said, form

“ the character of the rising generation ; they instruct them that self-control is better than indulgence, that labour is to be preferred to pleasure, that mere amusements, unlike honourable exertion, however pleasant, pass away and leave no trace behind.”

Just as the invention of the steam-engine and machinery and railways had tended to

turn the masses into mill-workers, so the Repeal of the Corn Laws, which affected the fortunes of the landlords, assisted to throw thousands of young Englishmen of the ruling classes into trade and oversea adventure. It was a time of great social and economic unrest which seemed steadily making for a republic, and might have succeeded but for those new factors in English life which made the material England of the nineteenth century such a contrast to the England of the seventeenth. Through them England was lifted to that plane of political power, moral strength and national unity which she occupied at the close of the century.

Socialist writers still "profess themselves puzzled to account for the failure of the English masses to accept the revolutionary programme of 1840." They did not know what we are able to perceive now, that new corpuscles had entered into the *liquor sanguinis* of Englishmen which would maintain their potency until the end of the century.

The moral and religious laxity which prevailed during the first two or three decades has been laid bare in countless histories and memoirs. Even when the masses had "got religion," the classes were abandoning their adhesion even to the outward forms of religious faith. The balance was restored by the example of the Court and the rise of a race of distinguished ecclesiastics, Keble,

Newman, Wiseman, Stanley, and the rest. Religion became again fashionable. The Englishman of birth and property again vied with his humblest neighbour in that punctilious attendance at divine service, which marked the social life of the Victorian era. Along with this new spirit came a new régime in the schools of the ruling classes—misnamed public, because they, almost without exception, administered exclusively to the classes. The old mixture of levity and harshness was swept away and a new educational gospel was inculcated in which the formation of character took chief place. There was nothing fundamentally new in the system. It had been in process in England for centuries. The maxims which ruled at Rugby and Eton and Harrow and Winchester were familiar in most of the great English families, whose aim was always to produce character and manners, rather than mere book knowledge.

But the system of teaching inaugurated by Dr. Arnold became more generally diffused. It was the gospel of what was called "Christian manliness." It had been found that the tendency of study alone was to produce priggishness. Study was therefore mixed with athletics, and the institution of limited autonomy amongst the pupils promoted order and the sense of honour and fairplay. It struck a mortal blow at the school prig and bully, whom we meet with in most of the old

biographies and descriptions of English school life.

The results of the new public-school system were soon apparent in the race of Englishmen of the mid-century. No other nation had ever dreamt of such a plan of secondary education. But it is to be noted that a fresh element of difference between the young Englishman of the classes and the youth of the masses and of other countries was thereby introduced.

Animated by the teachings of their new school code, young Englishmen began to turn their attention to the choice of a career. They found that there were other ways to distinction than by entering Parliament, the Army, or the Church or the Diplomatic Service. India and the Colonies offered a field not only to them, but to all the adventurous and discontented. Science, literature and social reform also invited many. To the uplift of the masses who, we are told, were in a parlous state in the "forties" many lofty spirits dedicated themselves.

Never was a nation so full of social reformers, of prophets, and the prophets were all Jeremiahs. As one reads to-day the strictures of Carlyle and Ruskin and Kingsley, one cannot help asking—Did England deserve all this censure? To-day we think of this mid-Victorian period as one of morality and self-restraint, of religion, zeal, and industry.

For all the jeremiads of those cultured reformers we feel that one week of the social license of 1921 would have laid the England of 1850 dead at the feet of outraged propriety!

Self-depreciation is a special characteristic of England. With all her pride and egotism, she has always been troubled, as an individual is troubled, with an uneasy conscience. It is not only that critics and censors are abundant—they are popular.

One looks in vain for a parallel in other countries. National critics exist in France, Germany, and America, but surely no other country would have endured the lash which her own censors and reformers laid about her so unmercifully. Surely, in any other country, the Scotch Carlyle and the Irish Bernard Shaw would have been promptly execrated and exiled as dangers to the commonwealth. Social and political Savonarolas flourished in the days when it was proclaimed that the population of England was thirty millions "mostly fools," and a talent for uncompromising denunciation was a sure passport to popular favour.

Or was it true, as some of her enemies said, that such humility under moral castigation and such sense of unworthiness were the result of supreme self-satisfaction, of culminating self-confidence?

Were the masses of England discontented? Did religion and loyalty not suffice to allay

their discontent? Then there were increased facilities for emigration.

This led to a curious phenomenon, which disclosed how shallow was the dissatisfaction of the Englishman with England. Nine-tenths of the English people who emigrated from England left her shores reviling her. Hardly had those shores receded from their sight than a different feeling possessed them, and by the time the emigrants had landed and contrasted what was before and around them with what they had left behind, than a warm feeling sprang up in their hearts for the land and the people of their origin. Men who had scarcely thought of themselves as Englishmen at all loudly asserted their nationality. Institutions and conditions they had fled to escape they now set to work to imitate. The very mention of "England" made them lyrical; they habitually referred to the land they had left as "Mother" and "Home."

Absence, says the poet, makes the heart grow fonder. In England amongst the masses there was and is hardly any strong sense of national consciousness. Few become fervid "Englishmen" until they have left their native land.

"When I was a boy," says Lord Selborne, "nobody thought of having dinners on St. George's Day or of toasting England. I think the reason was not that our fathers cared less

for England than we do, but because the greatness of England was as obvious as the firmament, and what was the reason or necessity of talking about it? ”

How different are the Scotch and the Irish, the French and the Germans, in whom race consciousness had been fostered by historic adversity and pressure from without! *Vaterland* and *La Patrie* are constantly on their lips. “*Erin*” and “*Scotia*” are magic sounds to an Irishman or a Scot.

## CHAPTER V

### ENGLAND'S CLASSES

The calm deliberation and the daring which led to the essential achievements of British Imperial policy must, after all, be traced to the fact that not paid officials did and do the actual work, but independent gentlemen, that "distinguished class" the want of which in Germany Bismarck deplored so deeply.

Certainly, it is only an Empire like that of Great Britain that can indulge in so wide an expanse of economically free and independent classes. Hundreds of thousands of English can take life easily, because millions amongst all races work for them. English Society is not merely the cream of one single nation, but the acme of an unbounded world-embracing Empire.—DR. CARL PETERS.

**W**HILE the warp and woof of the English character remained intact, England's social system, the national habits, and the national fortunes underwent a profound change in the nineteenth century. There are only two great elements at a time in England, the rulers and the ruled, just as there have been only two great political parties at a time; but there have always been social divisions. One of these divisions has been the Middle Class, which as it implies a mean between the Aristocracy and the Democracy would seem to



accord naturally with the English spirit of compromise.

The industrial revolution of a century ago sounded the knell of the monopoly of power by the nobility ; it was now the turn of the squire, merchant, and scholar to rule. We have now to observe the phenomenon of England as a supreme, imperial, mercantile, proselytizing power and the diffusion on a larger scale of the English Spirit abroad.

The masses of Englishmen, by the fourth decade of the last century, struggling as most of them were in the gathering maelstrom of Chartism, being exhorted by two utterly different sets of apostles—religious and secular. While, on the one hand, Newman, Wiseman, and Manning were eager to lead the masses to Rome—on the other, Charles Buller, Gibbon, Wakefield, and John Galt were beseeching them to obtain salvation in Upper Canada and Van Diemen's Land. More and more was England at large awakening to the newer conception of an overseas Empire.

Foreign and Colonial trade brought about a dramatic rise in the fortunes of Lancashire and the Midlands. Wealth poured in upon the cotton spinners and the shipowners, and from their ranks new families began to be founded.\* The wealth, however, thus ac-

\* And so it happened in England that the final collapse of Mediævalism came, not by the Great Rebellion nor by the Whig Treason of 1688, nor yet by the rule of the Great Commoner, but by the Industrial Revolution of the eighteenth century, which

quired was at the cost of a tragic vocational displacement on the part of the workers and the even more tragic transformation of the countryside. Parts of rural England underwent a change that utterly destroyed its character and in the huge industrial conglomerations which sprang up, the health, the habits, and the manners of millions became affected.

Man is an adaptable animal. At first it seemed as if human nature, thus wrenched from the soil and thrust into mines and factories, could not stand the strain. English sociological writers in the first half of the nineteenth century were pessimists to a man on this point. If human nature survived, if offspring were born and grew to manhood under these depressing conditions, the English character would surely succumb. They were wrong—the racial traits of the English masses persisted. In spite of almost incredible squalor and nerve-racking employment, the industrial population went on living their lives and reproducing their species.

We are too apt to exaggerate the effect of environment and labour on the human

created the England of to-day. Within a couple of generations the squire faded away before the mill-owner; and feudalism lingered only in the rapidly diminishing rural districts, and in the empty remnants of ceremonial organization. The mediæval element, in fact, could not survive the fall of the cottage industry; and it is, fundamentally, the use of new motors which has been for a generation destroying the individualist conception of property.—SIDNEY WESS: *Fabian Essays*.

organism. It is by no means certain that the physique of the Lancashire miner or mill-hand was markedly inferior to his agricultural ancestors or to that of the agricultural labourer in other parts of the Kingdom. Dirt and misery were not known in the rural areas, and although infant mortality became enormously increased in the industrial towns, yet it is doubtful if the percentage of growth of the population was disturbed from this cause.

England increased in wealth, but the wealth was more than ever ill-distributed. Huge aggregations of capital became general, and railways, shipping, and great industrial enterprises were built which would have been, as one Socialist writer observes, "impossible had more of the profits from mines and mills been consumed in wages."

## II.

In consequence of the prevailing human wretchedness whose only palliative was indulgence in drink, a great stimulus was given to the social reformer. Here, again, was a department of human effort peculiarly congenial to the English temperament and in which England soon led the world. The type of education which taught young Englishmen to hate cruelty and practise toleration and benevolence, predisposed thousands of men and women to take up the work of amelioration of

the conditions of life on a scale which even to-day is a source of amazement to continental Europe, but which has in our time been far surpassed by the American social reformers acting on English initiative. It must never be forgotten that organized philanthropy, like slave emancipation, is an English invention and that other nations have borrowed it from her. Rousseau and his disciples were professed philanthropists, but their labours were confined to theory and exhortation, just as were the labours of the older school of philanthropists in England, who either worked in the name of the Church or by generous expenditure commemorated their own piety.

The philanthropic charity of Lord Shaftesbury and his compeers was direct and personal, and sought to enter practically into the lives of the weak, destitute, and oppressed, and to exert the restraining hand of the law and public opinion upon the harshness and rapacity of the powerful. The philanthropic charity of Florence Nightingale was also direct and personal, and sought to enlist the services of science in the alleviation of disease and suffering as none had done before. Others sought to employ the resources of religion in re-establishing the self-respect of the masses whom industrial competition and spiritual poverty were submerging.

The contemporary spirit of practical benevolence is well illustrated in the writings

of Dickens and the other social chroniclers and reformers of his day.

### III.

When the masses in England became aware that despite the loss of the American Colonies a new British Empire had come into being, and that the idea of Colonies merely as penal settlements or dumping-grounds for the surplus population had been superseded by a new and altruistic Imperial conception, they were by no means unduly elated. They were invited to thrill with pride because England had expanded and new commonwealths, on the pattern of the old, had sprung up in the desert places of the earth. They responded coldly. Their suspicions became aroused. Who was to pay for it? How were they to benefit? Was it likely that a man who has been grumbling over the defects of the house in which he lodged should rejoice to hear that other houses of the same description had been set up elsewhere by his former fellow-tenants? England now meant to him low wages, long hours, dirt, and lack of opportunity to better himself. He rather distrusted anybody who had got out of it and prospered wanting to continue the old connection—unless he were bribed to do so. Glory was proper for a Frenchman—but it meant nothing to him. As for England—he hardly

ever used the term—although he heard it often enough on the lips of politicians like Lord Palmerston, who came down to harangue him at election time. These great men belonged to the old aristocracy—even when they professed Liberalism or even Radicalism. The English proletarian had an ingrained respect for his social superiors, and the example which they now proceeded to set in the matter of overseas exploitation was contagious.

If at first the masses did not respond as they did in Scotland and Ireland, yet from the shores of England there streamed forth the most valiant of her sons, the clearest heads, the most experienced administrators, the most earnest missionaries, at a time when the domestic condition of the Kingdom was such that all her resources were needed at home. Altogether within a period of fifty years six million Englishmen departed overseas.

Never in the history of the world, since the Crusades, was such a renunciation as England made for fifty years in the name of the "Imperial" mission of England.

Owing to the wealth derived from trade and commerce, the Middle Class was being recruited on a great scale. The prosperous mill-owners and shop-keepers were able to send their children to school where the English spirit was being systematically taught—and these schools were turning out thousands of youths who were eager to transmit, through

the professions, law, the army and navy and the Church, the gospel they had received.

Even where the existence of the Colonies afforded an outlet for much human material that could not usefully be employed at home, yet, as before, in whatever frame of mind, in whatever mental revolt when they left home, these men soon became, in exile, the most ardent supporters of the English connection and evangelists of English manners and customs.

Consider the domestic condition of the Kingdom in the "hungry forties"—think of the industrial abuses, the economic wrongs, the political injustices, the immense human suffering which prevailed at home! It is to England's eternal credit that Englishmen did not wait for self-perfection before setting out to teach the world the lessons they had learnt, the truths they had discovered! They were like those religious proselytes who no sooner "get religion" than a fiery zeal seizes them; they cannot wait to test them in the slow crucible of experience, even to try them on their neighbours, but must needs rush off to the four quarters of the globe to offer them to foreigners who revolt against them, savages who cannot understand them, and devout men of other faiths who do not need them. Yet it was this race of Mrs. Jellybys at home who played a great part in the moral and, perhaps, the political expansion of England. One smiles

at such a secular figure as George Borrow as agent of the British and Foreign Bible Society, forcing his bibles upon the peasantry of Spain, and incidentally crying up the superiority of English beer over Andalusian vintages; but these rugged English adventurers were everywhere—the archives of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel are crammed with romance—men and women who were determined to make the world English or perish.

“Acting,” remarks a distinguished American economist, “under the almost incomprehensible theory that the home country was being strengthened in the building up of countries which, although under the same flag, treated her only as a favoured nation, Great Britain has been drained of much of her expert labour and the fittest of the unemployed. These men, with their women and children, have been urged, even assisted, to leave; while the lands of the British islands cried aloud for intelligent and economical tillage. The sweat-shops of East London grew apace through unrestrained immigration of the more or less undesirable, and the wage-scales of industry remained at low ebb because of the cost of production through ancient methods and inefficiency. Like unto the mother of seven sons lost in battle, she gives of her children to the universal development and progress of the world, but the home is desolated.

F



“ To say that in this now fading illusion of Empire there lies a tremendous and magnificent pathos is to seem almost irreverent, for it is to the British nation, its world-wide and broadcast sowing of right-thinking men and women, that the world owes its progress in the last two centuries.” \*

Certainly, apart from the question of career or emolument, a vast force of mind and energy was sent to work outside England in the propagation and perpetuation of the spirit of England, which, directed to domestic affairs, would have regenerated the Kingdom. Abuses might have been rectified, institutions might have been organized, the whole English social fabric might have been beneficently transformed, with a tenth of the labour and the lives unremuneratively expended overseas.

On the other hand, it is possible that the whole potential, intellectual, and moral machinery of the nation might have been in operation merely devising legislative checks on human appetites, reforming manners, imparting knowledge to the young by novel systems and in increased doses, inculcating hygiene, inventing new devices for travel, new taxes upon industry, new penalties for indolence. All this incessant initiation, rectification, and administration is doubtless salutary for the bureaucrats, but it is destructive to the

\* J. D. Whelpley: *The Trade of the World*.

happiness of the individual and therefore inimical to the spirit of England, which is perfect freedom.

#### IV

If aggregations of capital found, upon the whole, that it could be more profitably employed overseas than in England, it was a happy thing for the Colonies that tens of thousands of English investors stood ready to support Imperial undertakings. Money followed the flag: and for much of it there was never any return.

This diversion of wealth was in a high degree sentimental, and the huge commitments made by the British Government overseas were largely inspired by patriotism and a sense of Imperial duty and responsibility. This is not to say that the millions poured by England into Colonial enterprises, the vast sums expended to protect or expand the Colonies and in punitive expeditions, were wholly dissociated from the idea of future gain; but it cannot dim the lustre of England's Colonial policy of the nineteenth century that in every instance the idea of Right and not Might stood first, that Progress and not Profit were the watchwords, and that the Benthamist doctrine of the greatest good of the greatest number figured in every manifestation of Imperialism. Herr Holstein used

to write with M. Delcassé on the theme of England's "greed and cunning." It is impossible to explain to foreigners (also to certain Englishmen) that not one single feat of policy, not one annexation of territory, not one system of government overseas has been devised in the whole of the past century with pecuniary or territorial gain as the cardinal object in view. One may multiply instance after instance, concerning which the terms "shameful" and "ruthless" have been applied; but a scrutiny of the evidence will show that the motive and, indeed, the principle underlying these official acts have always been benevolent and altruistic, and that if profit has accrued, if an increase of territory has followed, it has been due either to chance or to time.

If this assertion is not strong enough, I will fortify it by saying that in the course of one hundred years no Colonial enterprise on the part of France or Germany has ever been benevolent or altruistic, and that no responsible French or German statesman, until the Versailles Peace Conference in 1919, ever made the least pretence that they were.

England has officially profited by India and the Colonies, not merely in power and prestige, but in money. The money so received in tribute has gone into the pockets of both classes and masses. It is not clearly known how much India pays for the British military and civil regime in that country, both

to those in active employment and to pensioners, but whatever the sum against it has to be set the enormous service England has rendered India.

That same service—the promotion of civil concord, humanity, and efficiency—England has rendered other native races, and the recognition of her labours has come in the most decided fashion from the most enlightened leaders of those who, but for England, would never have emerged from ignorance and slavery, violence and famine.

## CHAPTER VI

### ENGLAND AND SCOTLAND

We may hold without disparagement to the Englishman that this island is the better for containing Englishmen and Scotsmen ; that there is more variety, more depth and more stimulus and more comparison.—**LORD ROSEBERRY.**

The difference between Scotch and English colonization is that the English transplant their national features wherever they settle, whereas the Scotch only transplant themselves.—**J. G. TAYLOR.**

**T**HERE is something especially notable about the Union of Scotland with England.

Every nation, every commonwealth or colony whom England has benefited—and all have received such benefits from her hands as constitute their most valued political, moral, social, and literary possessions—have at some time turned upon and reviled her, and some portion at least have sought to sever the bonds which bound them to her. But Scotland, in spite of many manifest differences of character, of outlook, of education, has, since the Union, shown no more resentment at manifestations of pride and egotism, no more envy or jealousy, no further lessening of

admiration than the Scotchman James Boswell evinced towards his overbearing English friend, Samuel Johnson.

Nay, there is something more in this parallel: for Boswell, by his good nature, his industry, and his real devotion, so insinuated himself into his great friend's graces that the union became mutually advantageous. Albeit a man of parts, Boswell's greatest quality was his receptivity, his capacity for assimilating the tone of his friend, and thinking and acting and writing Johnson. Had Boswell lived for a century and continued to make the moral and intellectual progress which distinguished him from the beginning of his association with Johnson, he would have died the wisest head in the two Kingdoms, and we may have seen some youthful English Gamaliel sitting at the Scotch sage's feet, even as to-day we see John Bull imbibing wisdom and culture from the benign philosophers of the modern Athens north of the Tweed. It is hardly worth mentioning that England's great contemporary lexicographer is a Scotchman.

Is it unjust to say that the greatest quality of the Scotch has been their receptivity, their capacity for assimilating the tone and the virtues of the English? They were not always urbane. Let not the Scotch forget in the moment of their great triumph, that when they first crossed the Tweed and descended upon the southern Kingdom they bore a character

far different from that which, owing to their patience and zeal and industry, they bear to-day. It is enough to say that they ate hungrily of the fruits of a culture which they never could have produced in their own land, were its history ten times as ancient, and that on those fruits they thrived and waxed fat. One may be a fervent admirer of the Scotch and yet be lost in wonder what special kind of civilization their race would have produced had either Highlands or Lowlands been guided to grace solely by the code of the Covenanters and the ritual of the Scotch Kirk—what sort of literature would have arisen had it been confined to the Gaelic of Ossian.

## II

If the influence of England upon Scotch civilization and the fortunes of Scotland has been profound, Scotland has magnificently repaid the debt. There is an Eastern fable of a seneschal who borrowed the cloak of his profligate master, and, mimicking his speech and bearing, went abroad amongst the people performing the deeds the master had left undone. As to Scotland, so often has the adventure been repeated in the course of the past century that the identity of Scot and Englishman has become confounded, and it is difficult to ascribe to either race its authentic share of virtue. But the ingenuity, the

philanthropy and abilities of such "Englishmen" as Mackintosh and Munro, Elphinstone, Aberdeen, Elgin, Dundas, Metcalfe, Livingstone, Gordon, Napier—to name but a few who did not disdain the title—were derived less from the native fount than from the deeper and more genial well of English character and civilization. The Scotch might industriously distribute the largesse, but the sack of gold in their hands was still their master's. Nor do we see, even in our own times, any proofs of a divergent and original contribution to world-civilization.

Changed as the Scottish classes and leaders have been during the past century and a half through their contact with England, yet the ethos of the people still remains different from the English.

"England and Scotland," wrote R. L. Stevenson, in one of the most penetrating of his essays, "differ indeed in law, in history, in education, and in the very look of nature and men's faces, not always widely, but always trenchantly."

He notes a difference in their degree, in every feature of the life and landscape. In England the

"warm, habitable age of towns and hamlets—the green, settled, ancient look of the country; the lush hedgerows, stiles, and privy pathways



in the fields ; the sluggish, brimming rivers ; chalk and smock frocks ; chimes of bells, and the rapid pertly-sounding English speech. . . . But it is not alone in scenery and architecture that we count England foreign. The constitution of society, the very pillars of the Empire surprise and even pain us. . . . The egotism of the Englishman is self-contained. He does not seek to proselytize. He takes no interest in Scotland or the Scotch, and, what is the unkindest cut of all, he does not care to justify his indifference. Give him the wages of going on and being an Englishman—that is all he asks ; and in the meantime, he would rather not be reminded of your baser origin. Compared with the grand, tree-like self-sufficiency of his demeanour, the vanity and curiosity of the Scot seem uneasy, vulgar, and immodest. . . . Thus even the lowest class of the educated English towers over a Scotchman by the head and shoulders.”

Yet it is true, at the same time, that one of the lesser gifts which the Englishman alone has contributed to the world is the art of social and domestic ease.

How imperfect are the facilities which are still allowed to exist in many communities for the attainment by the individual, the family or the community, of tranquillity, freedom of thought and speech, ease and harmony in collective action, and, above all, of privacy !

This is the art of life, and the English have mastered it more than any other people. On the material side, comfort has attained a degree of perfection which leaves other nations far behind. What is the secret? Why is it—the returned traveller may ask himself—that the Americans, who have so vastly improved the mere apparatus of existence (which the English, however, had originally invented) should be still so far from the secret that with all their receptivity, their desires, their ingenuity, and their luxury, life in America is less comfortable, less tranquil, less ordered than in England? A machine may be carefully built of excellent materials, each part designed for interdependent relations, and yet it is found in operation that it is noisy, impedant, subject in its individual bearings to dangerous attrition. It lacks something, it lacks it distressingly, stridently. It is oil. The English have invented and practise the administration of oil to society.

With this invaluable lubricant—which may be described as the principle of reciprocity—of give and take—each individual functions for himself in his appointed place, and yet connected by a transparent, volatile medium with the whole scheme of things. Here is the secret of his comfort. It is not only the secret of his comfort, but it has been the secret of the long effective operation of a machine which is avowedly ill-designed, ill-balanced, and so imperfect in structure and

detail for the work it has now to perform that without a liberal and ever-increasing supply of oil it would long since have fallen to pieces.

But Boswell has not been idle these forty years : he has been growing in dignity and sophistication, and his venerable friend, Johnson, is almost moribund. Yet even of the English-Scotchman it is to the trained observer still indubitably true, as Stevenson noted, that "even though his tongue acquire the Southern knack, he will still have a strong Scotch accent of the mind."

### III

Good national qualities are admirable, even serviceable, in their place. We are wont to hear of Gallic fire, of Celtic vivacity, of Teutonic robustness, as of Scotch caution, as desirable ingredients in the British character. The difficulty is to blend the English further. For the English character was eclectic centuries ago : it had absorbed almost to saturation-point, or at least all that was ethnically prudent, the virtues and traits of alien peoples, and when it had assimilated these, the English character was fixed. Its cardinal merit was its fixity. We seem to hear, in this hour of England's occultation, echoes of the nineteenth-century tributes to the English character from Frenchmen, Germans, Italians, Russians, Swiss, Danes, and Americans.

“Never and nowhere on earth have I met an Englishman whom one had to remind of his origin. To pretend to be a foreigner—even the meanest beggar on the streets, and even if he had spent half a century in a foreign country, would scout the idea as though one thought him capable of declaring himself a gorilla or a chimpanzee. ‘I am English,’ is still, for this race, the proudest expression of individual consciousness. Herein lies the real secret of the Anglo-Saxon’s power of expansion; for such a national pride must appeal to every foreigner who comes in contact with it. It is the reason that North America speaks English, although the Anglo-Saxon strain over there is greatly in the minority. It is the reason why the strong tide of foreign immigration, which constantly pours into Great Britain, is completely Anglicized by the time the second generation is reached. It is the chief motive power for the growth and spread of this world-empire in all the five continents.” ●

Whatever the Englishman was, both his admirers and his critics and haters knew what to expect of him. Even when he was ruled by a Jew, other nations knew that the Jew was only the delegate and instrument of twenty-five million English, that his acts were circumscribed and his utterances sanctioned by a Cabinet

● Dr. Carl Peters: *England and the English*.

of Englishmen from whose collective spirit no broad deviation was possible.

But it is when the Judaizing, Americanizing, Scotticizing process persists, when it permeates and replaces the old organic tissue, that the metamorphosis of the English body politic threatens its disintegration.

It is a wise thinker—not an Englishman—who notes that some races are obviously superior to others ; a more thorough adjustment to the conditions of existence has given their spirit victory, scope, and a relative stability. It is therefore, he affirms, of the greatest importance not to obscure this superiority by fusion.

“ The Jews, the Greeks, the Romans, the English were never so great as when they confronted other nations, reacting against them and at the same time, perhaps, adopting their culture ; but this greatness fails inwardly whenever contact leads to amalgamation.”

True, the Scottish people have never much influenced the English people. Their oatmeal and marmalade have effected a minor and beneficent revolution of the English breakfast-table : their whisky has replaced English rum and gin : but on the whole, there has been nothing revolutionary or subversive in Scotland's contribution to the daily life of the English masses. She has offered her moors and salmon streams to gratify the class

Englishman's passion for sport: and the Scottish game of golf has "increased the public stock of harmless pleasure." If the army of Scotch authors and journalists who seek to mould public opinion and minister to the intellectual needs and diversion of the patrons of English newspapers, novels, and plays do not produce a Scotch bias in the texture of English ideas and habits, it is because of their sedulous addiction to the established modes and prejudices of England. You will find none of the vulgar literary and artistic innovators and revolutionaries and decadents in the Scotch camp in England. It is impossible to conceive Oscar Wilde or Bernard Shaw or George Moore as Scotchmen, but very easy and natural to think of them as Anglo-Irishmen. It is easier to think of Lord Beaverbrook and Lord Riddell and Sir Charles Higham as Americans—although, in point of fact, they are not so—than as Scotchmen. In its essence the Scotch have affected English letters and journalism not at all: or only by emphasizing and illustrating the best native qualities of both: while the hetero-Americans *have* affected English letters, journalism, and the drama, as they have affected everything else in England, a great deal.

On the whole, then, the Scotch may be regarded as rather the custodians of the English ethos, in so far as morals, manners, and modes of expression are concerned: and their

service for a century was almost wholly beneficent, having, as I have pointed out, the sanction of the best English authority.

#### IV

Nevertheless, surveying the English scene, frankly, one is troubled at the increased intrusion of the Scotch, not so much in commerce and the professions, as in the higher polity—the business of government, administration, and the defence of England.

It was said twenty years ago by an acute German observer that :

“No nation is less methodical than the English, but no nation is less burdened with ‘leaden theory.’ One feels this in the inadequacy of all organizations, but, on the other side, it gives them the natural elasticity to meet new and unaccustomed circumstances without loss of time. That is why the English are the born Empire-builders of the European world.”

One can hardly call Scotch mentality “elastic.” One seems to detect in some of the statesmen and soldiers—say Lord Haldane, Mr. Balfour, Sir William Robertson, and Lord Haig, to whom England has consented to entrust the affairs of Great Britain at moments of crisis, something of that “strong Scotch accent of the mind” of which Stevenson

spoke. Intrinsically, it may be better than the recklessness of the Irish or Welsh, or the empiricism and "elasticity" of the English; but would Scottish qualities have created the British Empire, and evoked the deep respect and passionate loyalty of so many races for so long?

The Scotch are splendid disciples and loyal servants: they have co-operated devotedly in the world-wide pioneering and missionary labours of England: but again one is forced to ask, what had Scotland to give, out of her own peculiar racial genius, political, moral, social, or spiritual, to mankind? England's richness of invention, her speech, parliaments, party government, social organization, manners, customs, and ideals became Scotland's also, and she spread them throughout the universe.

Although the population of Scotland is but an eighth that of her southern neighbour, the part played by her sons in the public affairs of England and the British Empire bears little relation to the present population of Scotland. They have not only penetrated into every Dominion and Colony founded by Englishmen, and in most cases made themselves masters, but there is scarce a town or village in England which does not contain Scotchmen or the descendants of Scotchmen.

It were a miracle, indeed, if all this peaceful permeation of England by a race of men who "differ indeed in law, in history, in



education, and in the very look of men's faces," who, in spite of their transplanting and their versatility, "still have a strong Scotch accent of the mind," should not operate on the character of England, that as the Scotch become more, the English themselves become less English.

"I've never understood the Scotch," confessed the late American Ambassador, Mr. Page. "I think they are, without doubt, the most capable race in the world—away from home. But how they came to be so, and how they keep up their character and supremacy and keep breeding true needs explanation. As you come through the country you see the most monotonous and dingy little houses and thousands of robust children all dirtier than niggers. . . . The country people seem desperately poor. But they don't lose their robustness. In the solid cities—the solidest you ever saw, all being of granite—such as Edinburgh and Aberdeen, where you see the prosperous class, they look the sturdiest and most independent fellows you ever saw. As they grow old they all look like blue-bellied Presbyterian elders. Scotch to the marrow—everybody and everything seems—bare knees alike on the street and in the hotel with dress-coats on, bagpipes—there's no sense in these things, yet being Scotch they live for ever."

No, there is no escaping from the conclusion : this continuous operation of different races on the character of England, by reason of its qualities, has gone far to frustrate any racial homogeneity of the English. We have yet to see what effect the amalgamation may have on the British Empire. It may, of course, save it. It may, on the other hand, destroy it.

## V

It is perhaps worth while recalling that the young nations which form the Britannic Commonwealth are cast in the English mould, and their fabric is essentially English. For instance, they speak the English language, they are governed by English laws, and the administration of justice is almost universally that of England. Their civic organization is English. In English municipalities there is a Mayor, a bench of Aldermen, and a Coroner. This is not the case in Scotland, where the chief magistrate is the Provost and there is neither an Alderman nor a Coroner in the whole country. In the Dominions, Mayors, Aldermen, and Coroners are the rule.

Our Parliaments are on the English model. The Parliament of Scotland was a single chamber, presided over by the King, or by his Commissioner, who was responsible to the King alone and treated the Parliament as he

liked, its procedure being altogether different from that of the English Parliament. The latter, as we all know, did and does consist of two chambers, the Chairman of the House of Commons (Communes) being the Speaker, who is elected by the members and is responsible to them alone. The Parliaments of the oversea Dominions are on the English lines ; so is their procedure, and in Canada the lower House is styled the " House of Commons."

English, too, are our overseas weights and measures. The native measures of England, Scotland, and Ireland are by no means the same. The English mile, for instance, and the acre, bushel, pint, yard, and inch, differ materially from the Scotch equivalents or have no place at all in the metrology of Scotland. The English scales, however, have gradually superseded the others for practical purposes and have also spread through the whole Empire. The colonial nations compute their vast areas in English miles, sound their waters by English fathoms, and cut their cloth in English yards. The Australian digger sinks and drives in English feet and the gold is sold in English ounces. If the emigrant to Canada's North-West applies for a " section " to farm on, he receives 640 English acres, *i.e.* one English square mile ; and he reckons his wheat by the bushel—a purely English measure. Weights and measures, equally with language, enter into

the being of a nation. They affect everybody, and regulate everything, from the sizing of a pin to the delimitation of a frontier. Hence they illustrate the essentially English character of colonial institutions.\*

England has thus reproduced her lineaments—her form and constitution—in the Overseas Nations, and the expansion of the race has resulted practically in the expansion of England. One may appreciate the Scot as a valuable ingredient in the complex population of the British Empire. But to quote the pregnant motto to this chapter, “the difference between Scotch and English colonization is that the English transplant their national features wherever they settle, whereas the Scotch only transplant themselves.”

\* J. G. Taylor in *The English Race*.

## CHAPTER VII

### ENGLAND AND IRELAND

The Irish are the merriest people and the saddest; the most turbulent and the most docile; the most talented and the most unproductive; the most practical and the most visionary; the most devout and the most pagan.—HAROLD FREDERIC.

It can therefore be argued that, since contact between different races and cultures stimulates instinctive hatred, mankind shall avoid any attempt to co-operate on a scale larger than that of a homogenous nation. When a hundred years ago, the failure of the last serious attempt at world co-operation became obvious, Canning in 1823 wrote to Sir Charles Bagot, "Things are getting back to a wholesome state again. Every nation for itself and Gold for us all." So, in 1920, after six exasperating years of co-operation, many Englishmen find themselves again longing for a return to the wholesome state of national isolation.—GRAHAM WALLAS: *Our Social Heritage*.

**T**HAT which history is prone to account England's chief political failure may prove not least of her great contributions to political science and to humanity.

For the *débâcle* of English power in Ireland has at length demonstrated to the world the fundamental disunity of incongruous racial elements and the impossibility of maintaining a bond that is not physically organic. If England had finally succeeded in welding Ireland morally to herself (as she has done

Scotland and Wales) she would not only have smothered Ireland's dream of nationality, but have dealt a still more disastrous blow to her own racial integrity, and also to the principle of national survival anywhere in the world.

None who has even superficially studied the Irish character but must be aware of its startling antithesis to the English. In their physique, mental processes, psychology, the family relation, their ideas of conduct, their superstition, their uncanny emotional response, conjoined to an utter irresponsibility to rules of restraint, in their very courage, carelessness, clannishness and violence, the Irish are almost as far apart from the English as are the Croats or Sicilians.

Yet the whole history of the English connection with Ireland has been an assumption that two races so different could be welded, and the testimony offered through the centuries, by revolt, sedition, and emigration, to the impossibility of the process, has been disregarded.

For as long as the English land system and the English social scheme were valid in both England and Ireland, the general impression on the surface was that England was prevailing and would prevail.

What was not understood was that the human material amenable to English influence was not Irish, but English, in that country,

and that so-called Irish opinions, Irish character, and even Irish achievements, were the harvest of what England had planted there, and not indigenous to the soil and the fruit of the native character. The success of the English in Ireland was the success of the horticulturist who grows oranges and pine-apples in hot-houses. In that atmosphere they flourished. But break up the hot-houses and attempt to cultivate these exotic fruits in the open air, and what happens? The plants perish. The indigenous plants and weeds which the successful fruit farmer has kept down now spring up in profusion, and the demand for a product better suited to the local taste is so great that if the horticulturist is wise he will retire from the competition.

This simile of exotic fruits may be applied to most, if not all, of that long list of celebrated persons who pass for Irish, even to those who figure in the political hagiology of the country, but who are no more Irish than Robert Emmet, Wolfe Tone, Charles Stewart Parnell, or Mr. de Valera himself. As well call Mr. George Bernard Shaw really Irish!

As long as England operated through that class in the sister isle, which corresponded to the English governing class, and continued to maintain the bond of mutual political and social interest which united both, and at the same time both continued to maintain their own

power, matters could, with varying success, adjust themselves. But with the decline of the classes in England, the responsibility for keeping up the English connection fell largely upon the English masses, who, without any fixed convictions on the subject of England's pretensions, promptly decided on Ireland's doing as she pleased.

This attitude of mind was generally exhibited towards England's Empire. The idea of a "dominant" race appeared monstrous to the enfranchised masses who sprang up in the early "seventies." They knew well enough, as they thought, what domination meant in home affairs, and they looked with scornful distrust on the whole system of philanthropy—of taking up the burden of other races. They saw in it only an extension of the selfish casuistry which governed the duke and the squire, the parson and the mill-owner at home. As for them, they were all for "cutting the painter."

## II

But mark the effect upon India and in the Colonies, of the separatist policy of Gladstone and his Liberals. Instead of awakening to the possibilities this held out, instead of responding to the offer of separation from England, which was supposed to be their aim and manifest destiny, Canada and the other self-governing



Colonies underwent a stern and searching scrutiny of soul. It is to the credit of the acumen of their leaders that the more they examined the new English doctrines the less they liked them, and a closer acquaintance with the doctrinaires decided them to stake their political fortunes on the older and stronger horse. For, as has been said elsewhere, the overseas Englishman is not only a better political economist than the man at home, but he has a clearer view of history. History only touches the exceptional insular Englishman, and that in an impersonal way.

But the Colonist, the overseas Englishman, *lives* history. He breathes English history from his cradle. Remote from partisan prejudices, he is not deceived as to the true sources of the Mother Country's greatness. He does not bother his head about the balance of power, social causes, economic theories, ethical dynamics, the doctrines of rent and wages, the rise of parties, constitutional influence, *et cetera*. He knows that his ancestors founded his colony by leave and under the royal seal and sign-manual of Queen Elizabeth, King Charles, or King George; that they were governed by this nobleman or that, that the English law administered dates back to King John, that the officers of the English Army and Navy were and are English gentlemen, and that the appearance and the manners and the habits of all the English officials and their

wives with whom he is acquainted are far superior to the people around him, or to those of other natives, and he is proud of their leadership and the prestige they confer. He is also proud of a common sovereign, a common glory, and a common flag with these representatives of England. He is an idealist, and likes to model himself on English aristocratic institutions and to adopt an English standard generally.

But of the masses in England he knows only what he learns from the examples which reach him in the form of immigrants, bagmen, and globe-trotters, and for these he does not care at all. Thus, for the masses in the Colonies, the masses in England—even the middle classes—do not exist. They view the English connection through the spectrum of history, æsthetics, and imagination.

They have their own democracy, their own social problems, their own crises, and they have no desire to share those of the Mother Country. But they feel that their life is fuller, richer, and more spiritual for the fact of that tie with England. It has its uses in their scheme of life, and they are content.

The only answer the Colonies, therefore, made to the overtures of the English Liberals, was to run up the Union Jack higher and sing "God Save the King" louder than ever.

## III

Now, what I have written of the Colonies, is true also of the English in Ireland.

They, too, had their ideal, and it was not that of the Irish masses. The more their customs, manners, speech assimilated to that of England, the better they were pleased. They prided themselves on their unity with England, and they shrank from any idea of separation.

In Southern Ireland the history of the English is in general that of a class tolerated by the masses, with recurrent periods of revolt, and in that respect it does not greatly differ from the annals of the people of England. When democracy came to prevail in England, and the power and influence of the classes was lessened, the same phenomenon was witnessed in Ireland. The aim of the English democracy was to abolish privilege and gain possession of the State, but in their case the movement was rather anti-patriotic and against racial aggrandizement. Thus, intense nationalism and the patriotic motive became associated rather with the conservative classes. In Ireland, on the contrary, the excluded masses recognized social freedom and nationalism as the same thing. The classes held Ireland, and the classes were—English.

England tried to achieve the impossible in Ireland—to hold it by the imposition of a

power derived from an exactly equivalent class to that dwelling in Ireland, and exercising the suffrage. Such imposition democracies cannot endure, and consequently democracies cannot rule empires. As long as power meant prestige, superiority of birth, wealth, educative and personal influence, the Irishman might have submitted to inequality just as the English masses submitted. There would always have been zealots and mischief-makers, just as there have been in other countries, where the issues were political and social and not national; but these a good, steady, honest government could have dealt with, and in time there would have been no more recalcitrancy in Ireland than there is in Wales. But when power was seen to take its rise in the ranks of the English plebeians, when any free-thinking journalist or colonial attorney could represent English rule in England, then no amount of good government and generous treatment could keep down the smouldering flame of nationalism. Wisdom and generosity are no equivalent for equality, and it was political equality the Irishman wanted. With the English Colonial, the presence of an English nobleman as his governor reminded him of a glorious past which he shared with every Englishman: it had a contrary effect on the Irishman. It reminded him of an inglorious past, when Englishmen trod on his liberties and slaughtered his people. There was nothing that he could

share with complaisance except the memory of certain brilliant Irishmen who had distinguished themselves in the English Army, the English Senate, or in English literature.

The wonder is that England has held Ireland so long on such terms. Yet no nation has behaved so magnanimously or so generously as England has behaved towards Ireland these past fifty years.

When one reads of the extraordinary privileges granted to Ireland and Irishmen—the patience with which their boorishness in Parliament has been condoned—the good temper with which they have endured the sedition, the insults and sneers of Irishmen—one wonders whether there has ever existed a race upon the planet that would not long since have fallen upon these traducers and driven them into outer darkness, into, that is to say, their own land. No nation in Christendom—certainly not America—but must have felt sorry for the English for the severity of the strain they had put upon themselves. Admiration for their astonishing forbearance may have been tempered by the thought of the political and material victory which such forbearance must inevitably win.

#### IV

For generations Irishmen have enjoyed, wholly out of a due proportion, the benefits

of the British Civil Service, as well as the Army and Navy.

It is not to be denied that England would have been poorer without the addition of Irish talent in literature, in politics, in her armies, and in the professions. But it is when we come to scrutinize the specific instances of such enrichment that we find England only receiving what she had herself cultivated, selected, and administered. How many instances are there of a great Irish personality whose qualities and whose success were not the result of transplantation to the fertile soil of England? Imagine Edmund Burke growing up in the narrow fanaticism of his native land—Burke, whose character and opinions mellowed with every day he spent on English soil, and with every breath he drew of English air—so that when he came to die, no saner Tory, no stronger, wholesomer champion of the English *ethos* there was in the kingdom—himself the antithesis of all those qualities which have made the Celtic Roman Catholic Irishman notorious and so dangerous to civilized humanity; or conceive Sheridan, condemned to an Irish upbringing and milieu—Sheridan, educated in England, drawing his stores from the well of English literature, and from English society, without which his wit would have withered and wasted away for lack of proper nourishment. And the same may be said of Tom Moore, the Dublin grocer's son.

It is not that Ireland and the Irish race have not produced great men. But the quality and virtue and the application of these qualities is the test. The soil in which they flower is the test. The primary, not the secondary, benefit they bestow on humanity is the test. The world is full of "village Hampdens" and "mute Miltons," and the place of Ireland in Literature, Art, and the Senate is to be judged by what Irishmen have contributed in Irish currency to the accumulated stores of mankind.

Irishmen now have an opportunity of spending their own material and intellectual money. Let us see what they do with it. In America their own race has been raised to power and affluence, and we have not seen the Slavins and the Flanagans turned into patrons of literature and the fine arts, or the Moriartys and the Costigans expending their fortunes in beneficence, in promoting science, or in rewarding genius. What we have noted is that they exercise, on the whole, a baleful influence in American politics, and that certain departments of American life, such as sport, pugilism, and inn-keeping, have been indelibly impressed by the sinister Hibernian seal.

Another thing is to be noted—that amongst the millions of the Irish race in America, there, as in England, whenever they have succeeded to real success, or have attained to a distinction outside the narrow region of their own racial qualities, it has been by virtue of weapons

forged elsewhere, and not by Irish hands, by principles not to be found in the prejudice, the fanaticism, ruthlessness, and violence of the Celtic race in Ireland.

England does well to purge herself of an element fatal to her peace of mind. The separation of Ireland, by the large measure of freedom which it may bring England, is the most hopeful episode in England's recent history.



## CHAPTER VIII

### ENGLAND AND FOREIGNERS

The English are a generous race: I can say that, for I am not an Englishman. They have a magnanimity which goes always with the consciousness of strength.—A. BONAR LAW.

Many Englishmen seem to regard it almost as a duty to put their nationality in the background, lest they should offend the national susceptibilities of the heterogeneous mob of races that make up the Empire—all of them rampantly nationalist and blatantly self-assertive and self-laudatory. Such national self-effacement is neither wise nor broadminded; it is, in plain terms, mean, foolish and dastardly.

It will not serve to prolong the existence of the British Empire (which actually has already ceased to exist as an Empire), but it will certainly bring the name of Englishman into utter and deserved contempt.—*The English Race*.

One point about Rhodes struck me very forcibly, and that was his constant use of the words "English" and "Home." Nowadays, we must say "British," lest we offend Scotland and Ireland; but Rhodes was of a sturdier sort; England was England to him, and was deemed inclusive of all within the Empire. "England and Home" was the centre round which he wove his great work, and no more loyal Englishman, more true to the best traditions of England, has ever lived than Cecil Rhodes.—SIR RALPH WILLIAMS.

**W**HEN England had supreme confidence in herself and her rivals shared that confidence she had no need for a painful and perpetual circumspection of speech at home and abroad. Bluntness was a national virtue. All was well, no matter how lavishly this politician

praised the English workman or how richly that other buttered the private soldier. The English were all conspirators in a central idea, but were never themselves deluded. They liked to feel that they could at will escape from artificiality and constraint and give vent occasionally to sentiments more robust and less prompted by an organized hypocrisy. "It is all rather absurd," observed a Lord Chamberlain, *sotto voce*, at a Coronation, "but the people expect this sort of thing." "That's the stuff to give 'em," murmured an English orator to his neighbour after an impassioned peroration which had thrilled his audience. Wellington called his valiant troops the "scum of the earth:" Melbourne said cheerfully of the Garter that at least it had no "damned merit about it."

Such candour is a welcome relief from cant. How refreshing when Lady Holland is heard endeavouring to persuade Dickens from going to America. "If he must go and see third-rate people, why cannot he spend a few weeks in Bristol?"

One of the difficulties in the path of any cultured writer or speaker on theoretical democracy is how to express his honest opinion of the individual democrat. A way out is usually found in flattery, because Mr. Shaw's method of telling Demos flatly that he is an ass tends to retard a perfect sympathy. That is why a pretence must always be kept up that

a mob around the hustings are cultured philosophers capable of any amount and degree of ratiocination, as refined in their home lives, as moderate in their views and habits, as the orator himself.

This convention explains why in England the press lauds the flat and crude utterances of the English labour leaders as if they were miracles of perspicacity and wisdom, and the public is treated to a column and a half of commentary on speeches of this demagogue or that, which in substance and verbiage, would not be beyond the capacities of any fourth form Harrow boy.

But these, after all, are company manners. The conventions which make for good-fellowship must be respected. England has out-lived class condescension.

Company manners are very well as long as they do not lead to so ingrained a habit of hypocrisy that a nation or a class not only utters but thinks lies. A condition of deception and deceit with regard to our fellow-men may arise when we may ask, as Thackeray asked concerning truth in France—" *La Verité —où le diable va-t-elle nicher ?* "

While one notices in English life to-day a revived tendency to frankness in telling the truth, especially if the truth is unpleasant, yet the practice does not extend as far in certain directions abroad as one would like to see it.

One had expected a more violent reaction

from the silence imposed by the war : but instead of that new inhibitions and restraints have sprung up which, for one who reads only the daily press, is exasperating. It is a little difficult to know the truth as it is known to the elect who, even when they divulge it, wrap it up in a lie. And how far is this formal attitude of friendliness towards untoward, uncongenial things born of fear ? The Englishman was formerly fearless. He could speak his mind plainly. In the days when he owed America nothing, when the pound sterling was at par on the New York exchange, he could, for instance, describe the people and policies of the American Republic by their proper names, and not utterly spoil all his national reputation for bluff candour by a flood of sugary adulation of the inept platitudes of an American ambassador.

## II

The gifts of England to America are of the same kind as she bestows upon her own children and upon a scale only limited by America's capacity and inclination to receive them.

For in each epoch since the battle on the Plains of Abraham which paved the way for America's political independence some part of the American people have been in active revolt against English influence. But it is

not always the same section of the people. America is a screen upon which Englishmen may to-day see projected all that is most salient in her character and institutions in dramatic action. Every valuable feature has been shrewdly selected for its intrinsic merit and for its ability to enlist the interest or the sympathy of a hundred million spectators, a large majority of whom are prejudiced against the piece. Hardly to be wondered at, this, considering the "slating" it is constantly receiving in a cosmopolitan press and the fact that an Irish, German, or other aggressive malcontent is actually posted at the doors, threatening through a megaphone dire retribution to those misguided spectators who venture to applaud and even offering to head a mob to wreck the show.

Oh, decidedly, the heroine of the outstanding ethnical and sociological drama now running in America is—*England!*

Sometimes the villain seems about to close her career—we see the crude native democrat pushing her over the cliff, but a blow from a generous poet or a stalwart president saves her in the nick of time, and so, perpetually foiling plots and somehow eluding her envious evil-wishers, in spite of her accent, her carriage, and her clothes, she carries on her special activities all the way from Maine to Texas and from New York to San Francisco, including incredible adventures with the

denizens of a thousand Main Streets in a thousand Gopher Prairies of the roaring Middle West.

Fifty years ago James Russell Lowell wrote :

“ It will take England a great while to get over her airs of patronage towards us, or even passably to conceal them. She has a conviction that whatever good there is in us is wholly English, when the truth is that we are worth nothing *except so far as we have disinfected ourselves of Anglicism.*”

This eminent American went on to say that

“ the only sure way of bringing about a healthy relation between the two countries, is for Englishmen to clear their minds of the notion that we are always to be treated as a kind of inferior and deported Englishman whose nature they perfectly understand. . . . Let them learn to treat us naturally on our merits and not as if we were a kind of counterfeit Briton.”

It only remained fifty years later for Mr. Roosevelt to characterize Lowell as a “good Englishman.” Since Lowell’s day another set—real democrats, native and cosmopolitan—have taken up the old quarrel resolved to “disinfect themselves of Anglicism.”

Have these succeeded? Well, one does not know what credentials Mr. Henry Mencken,

apart from his being a native American, may claim. He is undeniably a brilliant, if rather too mordant writer, and he perhaps knows as much about his fellow-countrymen as Lowell knew about New England half a century ago. Be this as it may, this is the testimony he offers us :

“ Despite all the current high-falutin about melting-pots and national destinies, the United States remain almost as much an English colonial possession, intellectually and spiritually, as it was on July 3, 1776. The American social pusher keeps his eye on Mayfair : the American literateur dreams of recognition by the London weeklies ; the American don is lifted to bliss by the imprimatur of Oxford or Cambridge : even the American statesman knows how to cringe to Downing Street. . . . What lies under all this subservience is simple enough. The American, for all his braggadocio is quite conscious of his intrinsic inferiority to the Englishman on all cultural counts. He may put himself first as a man of business, as an adventurer in practical affairs, or as a pioneer in the applied arts and sciences, but in all things removed from the mere pursuit of money and physical ease he well understands that he belongs at the second table.”

Fancy either Mr. Edmund Gosse or Professor Saintsbury delivering himself of such sentiments concerning America ! After such

an exhibition of frankness it is to be feared the heroine of the supreme and perennial American drama would find herself in such a cavernous ditch that it would take the oratorical efforts of an army of Pilgrims to extricate her into safety.

It is a thousand pities that the restraint which the Englishman practises nowadays is not understood and appreciated as it deserves. It is still mistaken for intolerable national conceit. As Mr. Sinclair puts it :

“To the average plain American, the word English stood for privilege, for ruling class culture, the things established, the things against which he was in rebellion. . . . The Germans were efficient ; they took the trouble to put their case before you ; they cared what you thought about them ; whereas the Englishman, damn him, turned up his snobbish nose, not caring a whoop what you or anybody might think.”

### III

England will never really understand more than that part of America which she has made her own. The English spirit indeed is like a religion which is only received and can flourish in natures prepared for its reception. It is a seed which requires appropriate soil before it can germinate and take root.



English statesmen and journalists may not be aware of it, but nothing has done so much harm to English prestige in America as the cheap sentiment which seems inseparable from the discussion of Anglo-American questions. When the educated class in America resented what Lowell called "a certain condescension in foreigners," both they and the American masses better understood and respected the old English attitude of contempt than this new fashion of humble propitiation. Nothing that the English of the Victorian age said of American manners and customs is as severe as what Americans themselves have written. Every cultured American knows that what Dickens and Trollope, Basil Hall, Bourget and Humboldt said of Boston and New York and Washington of their day was true, just as he admits that what Messrs. Upton Sinclair, Winston Churchill, Frank Norris, and a host of other fearless native writers have written upon present-day America, as a whole, is true. But, like the English, the Americans are divided into two peoples, the classes and the masses, the civilized and the uncivilized, and the former owe their dress, their speech, their manners and their ideals to England, and form, in effect, a social province of England. They are in a different position, for they are the inheritors of something—the old English *ethos* which nineteen-twentieths of their compatriots do not even understand.

"The horde of immigrants eagerly accepts the external arrangement and social spirit of American life, but never hears of its original austere principles, or relegates them to the same willing oblivion as it does the constraints which it has just escaped—Jewish, Irish, German, Italian, or whatever they may be." \*

#### IV

Let us turn now to France. In spite of all the gushing professions about the *Entente Cordiale*, every shrewd, downright Englishman knows in his heart that the two nations are as far apart to-day as they ever were and always will be—perhaps always should be.

NO  
Change

"We have," wrote Lord Palmerston in 1857, "on the other side of the Channel a people who, say what they may, hate us as a nation from the bottom of their hearts, and would make any sacrifice to inflict a deep humiliation upon England. It is natural that this should be. They are eminently vain, and their passion is glory in war. They cannot forget or forgive Aboukir, Trafalgar, the Peninsula, Waterloo, and St. Helena.

"France, impulsive, capricious, jealous, unstable—with the best will in the world cannot alter her nature. *Le plus elle change, le plus elle est la même chose.* She may profess she loves England one day: only to hate her the next.

• Santayana.

"The fact is in our alliance with France we are riding a runaway horse, and must always be on our guard ; but a runaway horse is best kept in by a light hand and an easy snaffle. It is fortunate for us that we are thus mounted, instead of being on foot, to be kicked at by this same steed ; and as our ally finds the alliance useful to himself, it will probably go on for a good time to come. . . . Germany is too much broken up and disjointed to be an efficient ally."

Thus does history go on repeating itself.

One recent writer at least has shown that he can dare to be candid—to disregard the precepts of discretion and above all of political "tact," which has been defined by a commentator as a new *tabu*, which forbids men to say the only thing which is worth saying, which enjoins that no man shall speak of the mutual remission of debts when every one knows that this is the only means of saving European society : or to mention submarines, when they see France intent on claiming the right to maintain a great submarine fleet which can only be used for attack upon Great Britain.

France, in the opinion of the gifted author of *The Hope of Europe*, is in "about as much danger of an attack upon her three coasts, as the United States of America is upon her Canadian frontier. Her ships are as safe upon the sea as a wayfarer on Fifth Avenue. If she

builds submarines now, she builds them to attack British commerce, and for no other reason whatever. All the Ludendorffs and Soviets in the world do not justify a single submarine. Every submarine she launches is almost as direct a breach of the peace with Britain as though she were to start target practice at Dover Harbour across the Straits, and every one in England will understand the aim of her action as clearly."

Mr. Wells is not alone in thinking that some one in authority in England—or America—should treat the French people to a few "home truths." It could be done delicately and without boasting, and might take the form of a reminder that, but for the timely and prodigal aid of England, both France and Belgium, and probably Holland, Denmark, and Scandinavia, would have practically ceased to exist four years or more ago. In a military sense the English-speaking nations put considerably more weight in the balance against Germany than France and all the other Allies.

"On the financial side a large proportion of the wealth of England was poured into the coffers of our Continental Allies, and when France wanted more we pledged our credit to the limit in America in order to keep her supplied. Since the armistice, we have found the interest on these loans, and have not pressed France for repayment.

"Apparently, there is no one in France

to-day who has the energy, will, and conviction to even hint that their ship of State would be better engaged on another route. Her proprietors are taking short views ; in other words, they are so busy thinking nationally that they are unable to think internationally. They are all out to save France, when the whole world needs salvation. My opinion is that if she persists in such narrow, self-seeking methods, France will ultimately find herself outdistanced and without any real friends to come to her aid in the event of any calamity overtaking her. Her only surety to-day is to sail with the convoy."

Not less candid is Sir Philip Gibbs when dealing with the treatment accorded Germany : he points out that that which above all destroyed the hopes of the peace was not the terms of the Treaty, but the manner of it.

"I am convinced, from all I heard in Germany after the Armistice, that the German people would have responded eagerly and thankfully to any touch of chivalry and to any conviction of real justice. They did not want to avoid punishment, but they hoped that it would not be greater than human nature itself could bear without revolt, nor so cruel and vindictive as to reduce them to despair.

"A spiritual appeal to the German people, not based on threats of force, but calling with the voice of one people to another across the

fields of dead, might have been answered by the offer of a whole nation to repair the damage they had done, to atone by immense self-sacrifice and service, because of the liberation of this spirit from hatred and from bondage to evil ideas in a new era of fellowship after the agony of universal war. On the plane of realism it would have been better business, for the Allies would have gained more by consent than they have gained by force, and the impulse to vengeance, burning and smouldering in the heart of Germany now, after so many threats and so much hatred, might not have existed, but might have been melted away in the enthusiasm of the new-found movement of humanity."

This would have been the way of the English Spirit; but it was a way the cynical statesmen of Europe could not understand.

## V

Always has the English character had to endure misapprehension and calumination from foreign nations who are themselves so sensitive to any chance aspersion by an English public man or an English newspaper.

"How little," exclaims Baron Eckhardtstein (who spent nearly twenty years in England), "how little those people know England who accept the almost universal view that the

Englishman has no susceptibility and is a cold and calculating egoist ! Anyone who really knows Englishmen will agree that there is scarcely a race that is so profoundly sentimental as the English."

As to the taunt *perfide Albion*, the same German commentator observes :

" This French *cliché* of the eighteenth century was in its youth no more than a vent for French jealousy at the success of British *real-politik* over the French policy of self-hypnotism and sentimentality. England has been no more perfidious than any other state. What about Louis XIV. and Napoleon ? What about Austria, and, above all, Russia ? And last, but not least, what about Prussia itself ? "

It is all perhaps part of the price England has had to pay for success ; but such behaviour was easier to be borne in the days of her unchallenged political and commercial supremacy. She should meet it as the aristocrats of the *ancien régime* met the suspicions and contumely and insults of the rabble. Steadfastly and contemptuously conscious that her conduct, both before, during, and since the war has been dictated by sterling principle and never by interest, she should treat the gibes and accusations of the Chauvinists as they deserve. It is useless to argue with the French about English conduct in Egypt and

Syria and Mesopotamia, because you would be arguing not about facts of policy, but with a mass of inherent and inherited passions and prejudices, political codes and rules of conduct which are beyond all argument and reach down into the roots of national character. England can understand France far more easily than France will ever understand England.

## VI

If an Englishman is on delicate ground when speaking candidly of foreign nations and of his island partners, how much more delicate it is when an Englishman has to utter an opinion about the Colonies which England has planted, and, more delicate still, about the race which inhabits them? It needs a Colonist to understand the embarrassment of an Englishman's feelings and the magnanimity of his conduct. For here he has to acquiesce in the assertion of an equality which has established itself; established itself not indeed under his own roof, but in one of the houses of what he still considers his own estate. It is like the groom and the stableman coming to live at the dower-house. Long past are the days when James Mill could cynically declare that "the principal object of the Colonies was that of providing careers for the scions of great families." The Colonies—at least the self-governing ones—not



only resent the intrusion of Englishmen into their affairs, but they are ready to back their second-rate standards and half-baked opinions against those of the parent civilization, which long ago in its youth passed through that stage of civilization and knows the precise value of it.

It is not hypocrisy which makes the class Englishman flatter the crude Colonial who invades his drawing-rooms and his senate, but benevolence. He recognizes that this man, for all his uncouthness and mediocrity, represents distantly removed, much diluted, it may be, the spirit of the English race. The standard, though somewhat blurred, is his own. It is hard for him to forgive ill manners and vulgarity of taste, but qualities of character and outlook are more important.

He knows, too, that the Colonial Englishman—and even the Colonial Scotchman, is fighting his moral and ethnical battle overseas even as they fought his material battles in Europe. *A greater struggle is going on in the Dominions to preserve the spirit of the English race than is taking place in England itself.* For here overseas English principles have to meet a constant tide of alien influences, physically far stronger and more stubborn than England has ever known. In Canada, the difference between Quebec and Ontario is the same difference between France and England, French civilization and English. In Australia the contest is between Irish and English ; in South

Africa between Dutch and English. But in Canada they have to combat, in addition, the ethnic forces of Teutons and Slavs, and Italians, Magyars, Greeks, Armenians, Lithuanians, and Syrians.

If the English spirit is slowly winning in America, it is because there England had time to entrench deeply and firmly for two centuries before the assault came. For a long time the issue was in doubt. Even the fate of the English language was in the balance. Let it be remembered that in 1789 Noah Webster adumbrated a language in America as different from English as Dutch is from German. Another patriot, Dr. Ponceau, could discourse in 1834 upon "The Necessity and Means of making our National Literature independent of that of Great Britain." Does anyone imagine that in America without the English language the English spirit could have survived?

In letting the mind sweep over the earth's surface to-day one may ask, "What sort of world would we be living in had the course of the history of colonization been altered in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and England had not been the supreme civilizing power, but France or Spain or Germany or Holland?"

We need hardly ask what North America would have been when we have South America before us. Would Australia and New Zealand be free commonwealths under Germany?

Would the constitutions of culture and wealth, would a wholly French Canada be commensurate with those which a partially French Canada has made? Would Africa under the rule of Holland be more splendid than the retrograde portion which remained for so long in the hands of the Boers? Would India be moving forward in material wealth, intellectual progress, and self-government under the ægis of Spain? We may be sure that altruism and generosity to native aspirations would play little part in the development of countries whose political destiny was in the hands of the former colonizing rivals of England. Even the Scotch, Irish, and Welsh, for all the capacity they have shown as England's instruments and administrators overseas, could have brought no system, no special gifts, no force of example, no national prestige, such as the English could and did bring. Had they even been free and untrammelled kingdoms and as populous as England, their national batteries were not charged with sufficient moral force to make both themselves as well as other races move forward on a Scotch, Irish, or Welsh track.

## CHAPTER IX

### ENGLAND AND INDIA

The sense of national honour ; the pride of blood, the tenacious spirit of self-defence, the sympathies of kindred communities, the instincts of a dominant race, the vague but generous desire to spread our civilization and our religion over the world ; these are impulses which the student in his closet may disregard, but the statesman dares not. . . .—HERMAN MERIVALE: *Colonization*, 1861.

Can you deny that what is happening is that the English people have become a joint-stock company admitting Asiatics and Africans as shareholders ?—BERNARD SHAW.

**I**NDIA is a vast and populous continent wherein a handful of resolute Englishmen, after the best part of a century of effort, succeeded in bringing order out of chaos, and, in the words of Lord Meston, in "establishing a reasonable civilization on the ruins of many past experiments."

This great work was, after the Mutiny, continued by the British Government, and after the lapse of a similar period of time

"we have now reached the penultimate stage of that mission, and are committed to the gift of self-government as and when India displays capacity for it and the will to co-operate with

us. To cast her into the turmoil of ignorance and inexperience, which immediate Dominion status would involve, would be [in the same distinguished administrator's opinion] an unforgivable breach of our trust and the betrayal of our traditions."

"We keep India," once wrote another eminent pro-consul, "by the Englishman's gift of telling the truth and keeping his word; in other words, by utilizing the services of English gentlemen."

Writing in 1857, that memorable year in which England's beneficent hold upon India seemed about to be violently shaken off, Lord Palmerston was moved to say :

"It is impossible for any Englishman to allude to that which has been achieved in India—not by soldiers only, but by civilians and by knots of men scattered over the whole surface of a great empire—without feeling prouder than ever of the nation to which we have the happiness to belong. There never was an instance in the history of the world of such splendid examples of bravery, of intrepidity, of resource and self-reliance accomplishing such results as those which we have lately witnessed."

The eyes of the whole world are now again fixed upon India. Since the War, changes almost amounting to a revolution in sentiment

have taken place throughout the Peninsula—as they have elsewhere in the East, which betoken that England's long self-imposed task is being brought within sight of the end, not by her fault, but by forces and circumstances and personalities in which Englishmen have come to have only a lesser share. We hear much of the "questioning spirit" amongst the masses which, having permeated England, has made its way to India. A race of "New Indians," trained by England, instructed in the secrets of English administration, now loudly demand an equality, just as the sheep might demand an equality with the lion. "India for the Indians" was an inevitable cry.

As long as the Imperial government is in the hands of men who either experience the "craven fear of being great," or the not less craven fear of an uninstructed democracy at home which believes in racial equality and knows nothing of the problem of Indian government, then India is lost—not only lost to the British Empire, but lost to civilization.

India does not want a return to anarchy. She wants in her heart to be ruled; but she wants rulers she can trust. A "new" Civil Service has been inaugurated in India. That Service has been for the past sixty years a British—or as they still believe and call it in the Peninsula, an English Service—even though a few Indians of high character and ability succeeded in entering it. The new Service

will be half Indian. It would be a tribute to the English example and system if these nations could only obtain their appointments by undergoing the same training and passing the same tests as did their native predecessors. But a proportion of offices are to be allotted to natives who are to be selected on a lower standard than the English, the result of which must be to lower the whole Service.

The new Civil Servant will be much less of a ruler and much more of a clerk. He will be stripped of his magisterial authority. He must content himself with collecting or remitting the land revenue, and wrangling with inefficient municipal committees and district boards.

Mere education is not enough to govern India—natives might be clever at literary tests, but are not fitted by race and breeding for administrative responsibilities. Lord Meston, in combating this view, omits to mention the one cardinal qualification which has placed England in India and kept her there. He remarks that "it is now proposed to apply tests which will secure the type of young Indian best fitted by education, physique, and family tradition for the work of the Service."

Will the new system of selection postulate CHARACTER?

Speaking in London in June, 1921, Mr. Churchill, the Secretary of State for the

Colonies, spoke of the English administrator who is "constantly confronted with the problems on the spot, and must have the initiative and resolution and the conviction to decide upon the necessary action, and to take it when the decision has been made. It would not be possible to govern the British Empire from Downing Street, and we do not try. Downing Street attempts to supervise the action of resident governors, who are expected in every circumstance, in every theatre and in every condition, to act in accordance with the broad traditions which are associated with the personality of an English gentleman."

"That," he went on to say, "is a code which is not found in any book of regulations, but it is one which is widely understood, and in proportion as it is understood, so the government of the Colonies of the British Empire will be a credit to our race and our home. You cannot," he continued, "lay down rules for every set of circumstances and for every situation that will arise; but there is an instructed habit of mind and a proper state of morale which instructs a man at a certain stage and in relation to a particular set of circumstances which would make a man say, 'Oh no, you cannot possibly do that—nobody could do that,' and so dismiss the argument." He spoke of other races who, "with all their great intellectual power and



wonderful organizing efficiency, were completely lacking in that familiar sense of things you cannot do and of things that cannot be done."

## II

That Englishmen should gather together occasionally in India and emphasize their English nationality Sir Thomas Holdich was convinced, and had his counsel been adopted the history of India during the past dozen years might have been different. It is not only that such observances sound the assembly-call to the many scattered English units, gathering them into one bond of good fellowship and reminding them that to be an Englishman is itself good ; but it emphasizes usefully the principle which underlies our strength in India—a principle which differentiates the government of India from that of any Colony ; admitting no mixture of races, no colonization, but preserving the Englishman as a unit in the great white caste of Hindustan.

" Young native India still looks to that caste for its leadership and governance, whatever agitators may affirm to the contrary. No brown-tinted ruler (who is not a chieftain by right of heredity) can ever take the place of a member of that great white caste in the imaginations of the mass of Indian peoples. It is good, therefore, that Englishmen should

now and then override their insuperable objection to self-advertisement and recall the fact that although they are in India, they are not of India."

When Lord Rawlinson arrived an impetus was given to the movement to hold an annual English gathering on St. George's Day, but, alas! it was then too late.

Although in most parts of India the masses still look to "the Sahib" for protection and aid, and his help and guidance sought not less but increasingly as natives have to bear the real burden of administration—*i.e.* the responsibility for failure—yet the days are past when the district officer exercised almost unlimited power and ruled his district almost single-handed.

The men who won India and kept India, served India for the good of India. They served her in "the belief that England stands for more than Rome achieved and Germany attempted, more than the interest of the ruler, the lust of power, or even the march of civilization"; in the belief that "liberty is a nobler creed than dominion; and that England's is a rule to serve which is perfect freedom." \* Could they see the present, they

\* There was nothing more striking in the War than the fact that not one of the native races which had experienced German rule volunteered to fight for Germany, while there was not one race that had come under the even-handed justice of British rule which has not demanded with passionate loyalty to be led against the common enemy by English officers.—HON. B. R. WILKINSON.

might think, as many wise Englishmen think, the time was not yet ripe for that great experiment in government to which Great Britain stands committed, unless the young British Administrator who comes to India now is "imbued with a true missionary spirit, unless the faith that is in him is strong enough to enable him to see the distant prospect of the political regeneration of the people to the ultimate complete independence of the country which is falsely called the brightest jewel in England's crown, India is not for him." \*

"It is well," says Mr. Bhupendranath Basu to his fellow-countrymen, "it is well to remember what we owe to England when we put her in the dock."

"Where would these Indian merchant-princes be if the network of Indian railways, which bring to their mills the raw products of the country, did not exist, and if this same railway system and the British mercantile marine, protected by the British Navy, did not distribute their manufactured goods all over the world? To whom do we owe the admirable system of canals which have converted the sandy deserts of the Punjab into waving fields of wheat? To whose pains do the jute-growers of Bengal, the wheat-producers of the Punjab, the cotton-growers of the Central Provinces and Broach, owe the

\* A veteran Civil Servant, in the *Times*, September 6, 1921.

enormous wealth that is pouring into the country? To whom do we owe the excellent famine administration and the rapid means of transport which have enabled the produce of one part of the country where there is plenty to be transferred to other parts where there is famine, and thus save millions of lives in India? . . . The antipathies of ages have not yet died out in India; we are still divided amongst ourselves. . . . We may be an asset to England, but she is also a great asset to us."

England's exploitation of native labour? The industries she has founded have "provided a decent livelihood to millions who otherwise must have starved on the overburdened and exhausted soil." \*

### III

India, in setting her new house in order, contemplates, it is said, imparting the wisdom of Europe through the medium of her native tongues, Hindu, Marathi, Urdu, and the rest, making English a secondary and optional language. English, it is said, is to be boycotted, and will eventually disappear throughout India.

It may be folly to prophesy in such a matter, but I venture to predict that, whatever else disappears from that peninsula in which generations of Englishmen have painfully toiled

\* *Times*, December 20, 1920.

at tutelage—whatever other English monument or memorial perishes, India will cling to that tongue which a million Babus have won at the cost of excruciating agony and tears—cling to it even as tenaciously as the Irish will when their native literati discover that their coruscating satires and obscure vapourings in Erse trickle translated diluted, unheeded into the mighty pool of English literature.

“Even when,” declares Mr. St. Nihal Singh, “we have an Indian common language, I fully believe that English will hold its own in India. That will be the case even when the Indian boys and girls have ceased to be compelled to derive all their higher education through the medium of English, as they at present are compelled to do. English will not only survive, but I believe it will spread in India. My reason for so thinking is that that language gives us access to one of the richest literatures in the world, stocked with knowledge of all kinds. It is, furthermore the language spoken by hundreds of millions of people in all quarters of the globe, and through it we can come in contact with those millions. It bids fair to become the world’s commercial language, and even the language of diplomacy. Both for cultural and commercial reasons Indians cannot, therefore, afford to cut themselves adrift from English.”

## IV

After India comes Egypt, where England had in thirty years built up a fabric of order and prosperity which seemed likely to have won her the goodwill and allegiance of the Egyptians for generations. How comes it that this is so suddenly overtaken by disaster? Has the Englishman achieved his task? Is there nothing more for him to do? How can this be said of a land of eleven millions of people, of whom only eight per cent. are literate, and between whose native components there is not that trust and sympathy which is essential to self-government?

Think of what the fellahin owe to England. Recall their condition until the Khedivial regime, when England came. One can understand the scheming and plotting of the effendi or official class, who have profited by education and contact with the English administration. The peasant knows the effendi and their methods only too well not to disturb them. How comes it, then, that he himself has joined in the movement to end British rule in Egypt? We all know why. Every observer who was in Egypt during the latter end of the War saw plainly what the fellah was thinking.

“Circumstances conspired to rob him of that confidence in England which was his when Cromer and Kitchener ruled. When the Englishman is superior, none recognized

it more quickly than the humble Egyptian. But when the war produced types which were not superior, the peasant was equally alive to the change. It was human to be affected by it—to experience a lessened loyalty—especially when to that deterioration were joined grievances such as arose in recruiting for the Labour Corps and in the collection of Red Cross subscriptions.” \*

In effect, Egypt as a whole was willing to respect and obey British rulers ; but at a critical moment for both Britain and Egypt, the supply of the old breed gave out, and a stream of invalids and inefficients filled the barracks and the administration offices of Cairo and Alexandria, parading their feeble physique and ill-manners in the face of a disillusioned people.

Some day the story of mismanagement in Egypt during the War, and the decline of English prestige before Lord Allenby came—and came too late—will be made known, and Great Britain’s rulers will realize anew the unwisdom of the policy which made them neglect that important ancillary of the art of governing which Pater called the “ phenomena of panoply,” and to which Englishmen like Cromer and Kitchener attached such value.

It is passing strange that Great Britain, which practises what the American denominates “ eye-wash ” at home with such effect

\* Mr. Charles Dawbarn.

every time that a squadron of Life Guards rides in the London streets, which surrounds her monarch and her judges with ceremonies and decorative mystery, should think the grown-up children of other lands are less impressionable to outward show—less critical of slovenliness and slackness and of the manifestly second-rate! Is there not here some un-English accent of the mind perceptible?

But, alas! this is to raise a vast question, not confined to this theatre of war, which made one marvel at the perversity of judgment and contempt for human nature which could devise a uniform uglier than any known in the whole history of warfare, which could send a regiment of dwarfs (Bantams) to serve alongside of French and American formations conspicuous for their stature; which could select its sentries at vital international points from the C<sub>3</sub> class, and so convey to distinguished visitors an impression of British physique which, however consonant with certain tendencies, it was in the highest degree undesirable to advertise.

What a contrast to the spirit of the French Army Order which enjoined that

“ Les commandements des Quartiers Generales soient chargés de faire attention particulier dans le choix des sentinelles, qu’ils representent autant que possible l’élite de l’Armée Française.”

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Truly, in this respect, the national pride of the English was as badly served as were often the political interests of England amongst a people ever on the alert for signs of English inefficiency and decadence.

## V

Much ingenuity has been expended in endeavouring to explain the dramatic downfall of England's prestige in Egypt. It need be no mystery. As long as the masses in Egypt saw in the flesh Englishmen who corresponded with some closeness to the abstract idea of the Englishman—a man of masterfulness and strength—and compared these men with the native product, they beheld a physical, mental, and moral contrast which could not fail to impress. The order, the reforms, the improvements which flowed from the efforts of these men, commanded the whole-souled respect of the *fellahin*. The War came; the new British army came; disillusionment came.

Yet it is not clear how Great Britain is to be ousted from Egypt and its great task terminated without further weakening of will-power at home and a pronounced mandate from the great peasant class, who look back upon the old Khedivial days with loathing, who know in their hearts that it was the English who made them prosperous, that

freed them from the oppression of their own race, and by their scientific skill and munificence reared those sterling works which ensure the regular fertilization of fields sterile before the coming of the English.

“ The effendi may talk of independence—of Egypt for the Egyptians, and our young men shout for joy at the prospect. But we know when we are well off. We know the English inspector is our friend—that with him there is no bribery and corruption. Our homes and our wives are respected, and there is no more dread of the lash, as in the time of our fathers. No, no; send us more of the Englishmen we used to know and respect—and we will not follow the lead of the effendi.”

Such, in effect, are the views of the Egyptian fellah. It was only yesterday that they would have been echoed by the Syrian.

For, where in the whole range of the earth's territory under the influence of the English did English prestige stand higher than it did only three short years ago in Palestine and throughout Syria? To-day, as a result of its fatal policy of deference to non-English advice and interests, neither Jews nor Arabs have any confidence in England. Already the humiliating truth is only too patent—public security was far better maintained under the Turks. It is vain to endeavour to explain that

this policy was formulated by a Scot, approved by a Welshman, and administered by a Jew. "What then," they ask, "are Englishmen doing? England was wise and strong—why has she not sent an Englishman?"

## VI

The "Englishmen we used to know!" England hears and is not deaf to the call. Where are they? Perhaps these Englishmen are even now at a thousand public schools, themselves learning the lessons of fair-play, obedience and self-control, of honour and altruism, as their fathers and forerunners learned before them—eager for the day when they may depart and quit themselves like men in the service of England.

But a perusal of the letters from schoolmasters and heads of colleges on the subject of the British schoolboy and undergraduate of to-day does not leave us sanguine. His talk is of other things than duty and discipline and his altruistic mission. The ideals he cherishes do not seem to be those of the dead youths who lie so thickly beneath the earth of Flanders, whose watchword was service, and whose code may be sought in the lives of Donald Hankey, Percy Beresford, and Julian Grenfell.

England hears the call—but it may be she cannot answer. Her need for men of the old breed is too pressing. She has plenty of the

other sort ; but where, amongst these, will you find material from which to mould those keen, unselfish, masterful administrators who belong to England's past ?

## CHAPTER X

### THE ANGLICAN CHURCH

We have always contended and still maintain that our national ideals and race sentiment would have been in safer keeping had one at least of our Archbishops been an Englishman ; but, sad to relate, neither in Church nor State are Englishmen in supreme control.—THE ENGLISH RACE.

**T**HE Church of England, because of its rich transfusion by the English spirit, has long been one of the most influential institutions in the world. Its peculiar power was due not to its wealth, its organization, its gifts for proselytism, or even to its philanthropy, but to its capacity for imparting the standards and ideals of the English people. Its spiritual side was great and pervasive—it enlisted some of the wisest, the gentlest, the most unselfish men—but its human, its secular influence was even greater, and its apostles, even more than England's politicians, or soldiers, or traders, formed, when their achievements are carefully examined, the chief unifying and ameliorating power of the race. They taught the gospel of Christ, but they also taught a love for

England and the proper use of the English tongue. The host of Anglican priests and missionaries taught faith, hope, and charity, but they also inculcated Latin, mathematics, and cricket ; they expounded theology according to their ability, but they also imparted manners ; they administered infant baptism, but they were equally insistent upon the daily cold tub.

The Anglican Church has always been troubled about its orthodoxy : it has been assailed from without by all the great forces which draw their inspiration from Rome, and it has, at different periods of its history, had to sustain the successive shocks from within of the characteristic English sects, such as Lollards, Puritans, Baptists, Methodists, Evangelicals, and the rest ; but it was not orthodoxy it coveted, nor, being English, consistency. It only wanted to " carry on," to reflect the average spirituality, to continue to represent the current Christian faith and practice of the English people.

Of the religion of the sixteenth century ; when the Church was founded, it has been well said by Mr. Osborn Taylor :

" The time of Elizabeth and of Henry VIII. as well, was not religious in the sense of other-worldly. It was entranced by the delights of living. With the Elizabethans religion was an adjunct and a regulation of social life. As an

institution of the State it ignored the recesses of the soul. The Church of England was adjusted both to the royal government and to the structure of English society. Its policy, ritual, and doctrine agreed with the social and economic relations among the nobility, gentry, and people. It interposed no barrier to commercial expansion or maritime enterprise, whatever the nature of the venture. It did not hamper the free human development of the open-minded, or deflect the intellectual progress of the thoughtful. It shed no blight upon the flowering of the lyric and dramatic genius of Elizabethan England."

With its wide latitude and broad sanctions, its reliance upon traditions, its moderate appeal to eye and ear, its avoidance of over-zeal, its cultivated personnel and, above all, its practical support by the State and its possession of the historic temples and apparatus of ritual, it has continued to flourish. But it is not easy to see how, with all its resources and flexibility, it can much longer avoid a crucial and fateful ordeal.

For, in the course of the last quarter of a century, the English people, not of one, but of all classes, have been losing their responsiveness to religious direction, and, hardly less perceptibly, their faith in the established Christian religion. This may be due to the reaction of the Imperial impulse, as well as to

intellectual factors and alien experience, upon the old faith of the nation. As one observer puts it :

“ We are coming honestly to believe that the world is richer for the existence both of other civilizations and of other racial types than our own. We have been compelled by the study of the Christian documents to think of our religion as one only among the religions of the world, and to acknowledge that it has owed much and may owe much again to the longer philosophic tradition and the subtler and more patient brains of Hindustan and Persia.” \*

## II

No honest observer of both classes and masses in England to-day can shut his eyes to the change that has come over religious life and expression as a result of the War.

“ As I view the world, and the Church—especially the Church of England—at the present day,” solemnly states Bishop Gore, I cannot feel hopeful about the immediate prospect. The prophets and experience alike convince me that there can be no real recovery except through a general return to God ; and of such a return I see no sign.”

\* Graham Wallas : *Our Social Heritage*.



Even where there is still an outward conformity, zeal and conviction are too manifestly lacking. It may be but a chance circumstance—a passing oversight—but for the first time at a recent opening of Parliament an English king was made to omit to invoke the traditional divine blessing upon its deliberations.

The prevalent religious unbelief has been widely discussed. The discussion has overflowed from the religious into the secular press—into quarters where one would little expect to find it. The consensus of opinion is clear enough.

“Men,” according to one clergyman, “who have faced death in the trenches . . . will never be content to sit in a hypnotic trance while prayers, psalms, and lessons are read over them.”

Another writes :

“I suppose no one except the priest of a country parish can realize the absolute indifference to religion which prevails. Such ‘religion’ as may exist to the English rustic is really a sort of pantheism. God is either a disagreeable man responsible for all their troubles, or a negligible quantity. People know nothing about the Sacraments and care less. The proportion of communicants is infinitesimal.”

And this is the time, when the solace of

religion would seem to be needed in countless homes bereaved by the War, that the Christian religion is called upon to restate its message ; when, instead of the fervent, passionate, uncompromising defiance of the old Fathers, the summons to surrender is answered by the intellectuals of the Church, who are now seen busily engaged in developing and demonstrating a Christianity so purged of dogma that it can almost dispense with Christ.

If, as a spiritual force, the weakness of the Church is shown in the national apathy, as an institution its material safety also lies in that same apathy. If the shrewdest and most enlightened clerics were worldly-wise, they would not raise the issue. For, as one of their own number has confessed :

“ if a man’s views are really unchristian, he ought not to have a cure of souls ; but even then it is better to leave him either to unchurch himself or to destroy his own influence by the manifest inconsistency of his position. It must be remembered that no inquisition can get rid of a crypto-Liberal from the Church. *A man who can hold his tongue can hold anything.*” \*

To show how far orthodox Englishmen and the English Church have travelled along the pathway of religious heterodoxy within the life of a single man, one has only to re-read the

• Dean Inge.

famous *Essays and Reviews*, or Bishop Colenso's book on the Pentateuch. Every point then at issue, which caused such soul-searching, is gradually being given up. Recently, Canon Barnes, of Westminster, who, as a Fellow of the Royal Society, might speak authoritatively about the ascertained results of modern science, told his congregation that the description of the creation of the world in Genesis "belongs to folk-lore, not to history." The Mosaic cosmogony has gone by the board. Traditionalism has few supporters. The doctrine of Evolution may now be openly avowed without reproof. As for all the Old Testament narrations—Adam and Eve, Balaam's ass, and Jonah's whale—the Dean of St. Paul's puts them at once in the category of fairy tales.

"These stories," he says, "which have no more to do with the Christian religion than *Jack and the Beanstalk*, have been a millstone round the neck of the Church, which, as it is, finds it hard enough to keep its head above water in its conflict with the world, the flesh, and the devil."

What does not seem to occur to the intellectuals is where they are going to draw the line between historical fact and fable. Amongst intelligent men, even in the Church, it has long been realized that doubt cannot stop at the personages, incidents, and miracles of the Old

Testament. Miracles have, as Matthew Arnold said, been pricked by Ithuriel's spear. It is not merely the case of Balaam's ass and Jonah's whale ; the story of the Immaculate Conception, the Annunciation, the Adoration of the Shepherds, and the Resurrection of Christ, which have ceased to command faith. It is the Creed itself which is becoming incredible to the masses.

### III

For centuries the English Church has adapted itself to English society—not this or that section, or this or that clique or class—but to what it believed to be, and what indeed has proved to be, the general nature and principles of the English people. In this way it came to reflect the national tastes and prejudices and weaknesses, but it also held to broad-mindedness, moderation, and common sense. Sometimes antagonistic influences were too strong for it, and it could not accommodate itself to the altered temper of the age. The Puritan system, which was that of constraining all things to principles actually and literally laid down in Scripture, was never really congenial to the English nature. The strength and narrow sincerity of Puritanism, the rigid restraint it imposed on conduct and the emotions, made such a system of religion only suitable for a time of reaction or for a limited

order of minds. Methodism and the Baptist cult also belonged only to a phase of spiritual revolt, or to a stage of spiritual progress. When these systems were pressed too far there was a natural reaction towards the more florid and artificial dogma and ritual of the Roman Church. And all the time the English hierarchy was endeavouring to keep the balance, to combine in the Church itself all the elements which the bulk of the nation wanted, avoiding those extremes which were the rallying cries of the sects.

Its dogma was enshrined in the Thirty-nine Articles, but the interpretation of this body of dogma was vague and grew vaguer. The fundamental part was belief in one God, the divinity of Jesus Christ, and life, either in heaven or hell, after death. This the English Church taught, and this is what every Christian denomination teaches.

But this formed only the framework and main pillars of its gospel. The great body and fabric consisted in its elaboration of and insistence upon the moral side of religion, upon conduct, service, temperance, chastity, decency, and charity—which were given a far greater importance in the teaching of the English Church than in any other denomination. Thus by degrees and in practice doctrine became a tacit quality, and good conduct the ideal of a good Churchman. To be a good Christian was to be a gentleman, and

conversely also, it seemed that to be a good gentleman was to be a Christian.

More and more, therefore, the Church of England, in practice, out of the mouths of its leading clergy, by the example of its most conspicuous adherents, is seen to shun the mere exposition or defence of Scriptural history and dogma, or even the formal articles of its religion, and to dwell rather upon the wisdom and beneficence of God, the exemplary character and sayings of Christ, good works, good citizenship, human helpfulness, even good sportsmanship.

At the same time many of the later Anglican clergy appear to have lost their way, and are apt to consider that any "meddling" with the teaching of civic duty and the virtue of Patriotism is not only a matter apart from their sacred vocation, but derogates somewhat from the dignity of the priestly office, and is more within the province of the school-master and the politician. Religion and Patriotism should go hand in hand, the one, more especially in a *National* Church, being the complement of the other.

#### IV

This, then, is the New Christianity. It need not teach the Christian mysteries any more, or the supernatural character of Scripture—it only seeks to impart the Spirit of Truth.

But let that eloquent protagonist of clerical freedom, Dean Inge, state the case in his own words :

“ In the study of ‘ religious experience ’ our generation has found a complete justification of faith as a normal and healthy activity of the human mind, and has gained a new understanding of the saintly life as one of the fine flowers of human genius. The foundations of Christianity have never been less in danger than they are now.

“ Those who believe in a divine revelation through Christ, in an eternal spiritual world which is our true home, and in the standard of values and rule of life which the New Testament lays down, may safely be allowed great liberty in dealing with traditional beliefs. If we have faith in the truth of our message, and in the tendency of truth to establish itself against error ; if, above all, we believe that the world is being educated by the Spirit of Truth, we shall not be over-anxious to buttress up every crumbling outwork of the fortress, and to bar the path of free inquiry.

“ Even if in some cases the new opinions prove to be erroneous, as we should naturally expect, it is far better that the truth should be hammered out without official interference. The heavy hand of authority may sometimes force a man to *unsay* ; it cannot make him *unsee*.”

Now, all this is very true and very liberal ; but the Established Church of England is maintained by the English taxpayer. Apart from its function as a teacher of morals and manners, and a promoter of music and oratory and social concord, will the nation care to support an institution for the cultivation of the Spirit of Truth—for the “hammering-out” of controversial points? Faith—it is immaterial what faith—is (according to Dean Inge) *per se* a “normal and healthy activity of the human mind”—whether it leads to anything or not. Many will surely think that this sounds perilously like, if not, Agnosticism—at least a latitudinarianism that is frankly illimitable. And so, while the old-fashioned Christians rubbed their eyes, the eminent Dr. Rashdall, Dean of Carlisle, in August, 1921, developed at length to a complacent congregation his statement of the non-divinity of Christ.

May one venture, at this point, to obtrude a parable ?

## V

There is a body in England known as the Navy League. The first article in its faith is the necessity for a strong navy. It lays it down as an absolute rule, from which there can be no appeal or deviation, that Great Britain can only be safe and the British Empire

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be protected by the existence of a more powerful fleet of battleships than any other Power. It has expended much energy, much money and energy in preaching this doctrine. It has established a widespread organization and propaganda. Supposing doubts were to creep in amongst its members as to the comparative merits of Dreadnoughts and battleships, or the ratio of first-class battleships to cruisers, of destroyers to submarines—these doubts could be met and differences of opinion adjusted without touching upon the supreme and inviolable article of faith—a mighty British Navy. No member need resign because of questions of that sort. But suppose an increasing number of members of the Navy League were to be assailed by doubts not only of the utility of battleships, but of the need of a navy at all as a fighting arm, then clearly, if its adherents continued banded together at all, the League would undergo a great change of purpose. And when the Navy itself had gone, no one, not even Sir Percy Scott, would doubt the greatness of the power and need for the old Navy in the old time, which was now past. The League, perhaps even with increased membership, would become a conservator of historic and patriotic traditions, and a notable upholder of what it would call the Spirit of the old Navy. It would celebrate with pomp and magnificence old naval festivals. It would mark the birthdays of Drake and

Blake and Nelson. It would make a calendar of Naval Saints. It would keep alive, out of its own resources and not those of the taxpayer, the memory of the glory of the old Navy by a recital of the deeds and the maxims of the ancient race of seamen.

But so far as current human life was concerned, the cult of an Invincible Navy would be as dead as Absolute Monarchy. The splendid vessels that cult had wrought might be converted into argosies of commerce, or seminaries of seamanship where maritime skill, discipline, and hardihood might be taught, but they would be scenes of carnage and instruments of dominion no more.

What I have written is only a parable. It may be that the Church of England will never be cast upon the scrap-heap. The belief in God, the instinct for worship, the morality of Jesus, and the hope of immortality constitute a force which will survive revolutions and even republics, and the ancient and hallowed temples of the Church of England will serve and enshrine her religion as long as the English race endures.

But if they do so, it will mean that the hierarchy has wisely adapted the Church to the spiritual needs of the age, that they have faced the issues born of human progress and human aspiration boldly and sincerely, and no longer attempt to save themselves by evasions and

subterfuge. If the Church base itself on the eternal essentials—if she conform always to the English Spirit—cycles of disbelief may come and go—and Disestablishment, now impending, prove but a trivial episode in her career.

Meanwhile, Englishmen may surely be pardoned for pointing out to their two Scotch archbishops, that the Church of England was established for the express purpose of ministering to the spiritual necessities of the English people. It is therefore the *National Church* ; but its duties do not end there—they admit of a wider interpretation. Its clergy are in a position to lead, direct and inspire ennobling ideals which should serve to compact and bind together a loyal and patriotic people.

“ It is not held that it should not engage in missionary work outside England, but it is asserted where its duty lies, and where its revenues are derived, should be its first care, for otherwise it forfeits its claim to be considered National. But this is exactly where it does fail, and the word ‘ England ’ is in danger of becoming merely titular and appellative. An exaggerated Catholicism is doubtless contributing to the weakening of our National Church, and thus causing it to abandon its true and distinctive function.

“ Love of England—Patriotism—should be inculcated from every pulpit of our National Church ; but how can this be expected from

thrones and pulpits which dwell upon ' British ' ideals and inculcate the branch of cosmopolitanism, of which the reactionary Lord Robert Cecil is the spokesman ? " \*

Not long since a Church Crusade was inaugurated, and missionaries were sent forth to arouse the *People of England*. Acting, no doubt, under instructions, many presumed to address English congregations as " British." Little or no appeal was made by these itinerant preachers to English ideals, to national pride and sentiment, or to patriotism. Naturally, the movement proved an utter failure !

\* *The English Race.*

## CHAPTER XI

### ENGLAND'S LITERATURE AND ART

The French language is not strung with sinews like our English; it has the nimbleness of a greyhound, but not the bulk and body of a mastiff. Our men and our verses overbear them by their weight, and *pondere, non numero*, is the British motto. The French have set up purity for the standard of their language, and a masculine vigour is that of ours. Like their tongue is the genius of their poets—light and trifling in comparison of the English.—DRYDEN.

**I**N enumerating the cardinal contributions of England to world civilization English literature would probably be accorded by universal consent the next place after English government.

He would be a bold man who would attempt to appraise the gift of the English language, the reason for whose increasing universality might be ascribed to other than intrinsic reasons. It may well be, as Lord Sherbrooke said it was,

“a language richer, probably, and containing more varied treasures than the treasures contained in any other language; which began to be formed and fashioned earlier than

any other in Europe, except the Italian, which it surpasses in everything except mere sound, that constitutes the beauty of a language."

All one may venture upon here is to exhibit English literature as a vehicle for the diffusion of the English Spirit.

If, in English literature, a splendid and enduring monument was, almost from the first, created, it is perhaps because literature, as the English masters practised it, was less an art than the natural outpouring of thought and mental imagery, the spontaneous revelation of character. No true Englishman cares, or has ever cared overmuch, for that torturing process of assimilating symbols to special moods and meanings—of grouping for colour and symmetry with the meticulous pains of the worker in mosaic.

In literature, as in all so-called art in England, the supreme test is not technique, but matter. Artifice is resented. The truly national works are the direct expression and interpretation of the innate and authentic genius of their writers. Thus Bunyan is a great English writer—he could never have been a great French writer.

Speaking of English poetry and fiction, Mr. Santayana thinks that

"their very incoherence and artlessness, which they share with so much else that is English,

lend them an absolute value as an expression. They are the mirror and prattle of the inner man, a boyish spirit astray in the green earth it loves, rich in wonder, perplexity, valour, and faith, given to opinionated little prejudices, but withal sensitive and candid, and often laden, as in *Hamlet*, with exquisite music, tender humour, and tragic self-knowledge."

Verse—especially rhymed verse, is an intricate sort of game, not necessarily for poets. At its best it exacts ingenuity, skilful craftsmanship—it is the elaboration of ornament than which nothing can be more exotic. It was when the Shakespeare of the *Sonnets* ceased to be an "artist," when, instead of repressing the flood into pretty fountains and coruscating sprays, he allows it to pour forth unrestrained, that he achieves success. To speak of Shakespeare as an "artist" is to impugn his Englishism. He is never artful. His mind concerns itself little with symmetry. He is English—he writes on out of the fullness of his mind just what the English want—never blotting a line. In this largeness, openness, raciness, he is in complete affinity with Chaucer, that "perpetual fountain of good sense." Not inapt the comparison Milton made of him to an English songster "warbling his native wood notes wild."

Amongst his successors there is the same spirit, modified by the influence of the times

in which they lived. Milton, a scholar and a Puritan, is full of the English spirit. A proof of this in the untranslatability of *Paradise Lost*. A perusal of the French version will demonstrate how completely the whole tone of the poem is alien to Latin thought and the Latin moral outlook.

Dryden, too, is English in the very heart of him. He, like Shakespeare, was little given to correction.

“Everything,” as Lowell says, “seems struck off at a heat, as by a superior man in the best mood of his talk. Where he rises he generally becomes fervent, rather than imaginative; his thought does not incorporate itself in metaphor, as in purely poetic minds, but repeats and reinforces itself in simile.”

Other essentially English writers are Defoe, Addison, and Steele; but we do not reach another such until Fielding, who represents what may be called the comic or secular spirit, and Johnson, who is typical of the didactic Englishman. Reviewing these figures, it is easy to detect those in whom the English spirit is strongest: who are truest to type, by comparing them in their complete character with contemporary French or German writers.



## II

England's contribution to the world's Literature was marked not only by sober solid qualities of a homeliness and seemingly unpremeditated delineation of life, but it was inevitable that at times and in directions it should seem to be swamped and tintured beyond recognition by foreign influences. It says much for the steadfastness of the English reading public of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that it should have on the whole remained loyal to its own standards. It is nothing to the purpose if much of the literature produced has not stood the test of time—that, indeed, much of it was fustian. Its great virtue was that it reflected the life, thoughts, and aspirations of the people—or if it did not do that, that it reflected their prejudices. There is no intensity about it, it had no message for mankind; but that does not mean that the works of Richardson were without high value in Continental eyes, for they supplied precisely what was most wanting in that literature, so rich in sensation and emotion—a sedative.

Byron is rather an example of universal youth in literature than of the English spirit. His genius, forceful, tumultuous, mocking, passionate, though with a marked Celtic strain, was yet English at bottom. Anyone who reads carefully the poet's later

correspondence will perceive the truth of Macaulay's shrewd surmise, that Byron would have become a sober and respectable Englishman had destiny granted him longer life.

In fact, in the productions of all Englishmen of talent or genius when they are closely analysed, no matter what pose they adopt or what cause they espouse, rarely do they succeed in working free of the English spirit. Whether they are mystic like Coleridge, passionate like Shelley, whimsical like Lamb, or crotchety like Peacock or Borrow, it will be found that these qualities which permeate their writing are essences, but only in the sense of infusion and not of their basic element, which is English—English in its common sense, breadth, and good nature.

Dickens is the English writer of his age, because of his complete saturation with the English spirit.

### III

England, like Bohemia, has now come to be less a geographical term than a state of mind. The English spirit in literature is not confined to literature in English only, nor in that literature need the artificers be English, so long as they handle English tools and conform to English canons. But where there is a moral deviation, and the deviation is persisted in, it is permissible to ascribe it to the processes

of an alien temperament. Vivid and alluring as the talent of these younger men may be, and dexterous in technique, the spirit of England is not in their souls, and the ornaments they impose are of different stuff and texture to the gracious fabric we know.

This is the day of the Shaws, Barries and Conrads, Mackenzies and McKennas, Beer-bohms and Frankaus, and the prancing youth to whom England has given their artistic franchise and livelihood but who take their law from the prophets over-channel.

One seeks in vain in the productions of these writers for that serenity, poise, and clarity which distinguishes great English literature. Their style is too sentimental, too volatile, too charged with allusiveness, to deliver the message of a truly English mind.

In his character of national mentor and monitor, Dean Inge recently put in an earnest plea for what he calls

“the good old English tradition in fiction, and to deprecate a corrupt following of Continental fashions. The English tradition is that a novel should be written to give pleasure; that it should be clean and wholesome; that it should describe scenes and characters that are interesting and attractive, and avoid topics which well-bred persons do not discuss and would not wish to witness.

“Much,” continues the Dean, “has been

said about the prudery of the Victorian age, and nobody wishes to bring back the conspiracy of silence which left all manner of social diseases untouched because the subject is 'not nice,' or the absurd embargo which was put upon perfectly moral books like *The Heart of Midlothian* and *Jane Eyre* and *Adam Bede*. By all means let us face the world as it is, and not hush things up in literature or in conversation. But we may do this without surrendering to the Continental tradition.

"Let our novelists leave the foreigner to go his own way, and be content to write like Scott, or Jane Austen, or Thackeray, or Mrs. Gaskell, or even Trollope. As works of art their books may be faulty in arrangement—so are Shakespeare's plays, for that matter—but they represent English life and English morality and English taste, which ought to be good enough for an English writer."

To an Englishman with a sense of humour how Gilbertian must have appeared the assemblage of five Scotchmen at the Mansion House in 1914 to inform the English people how best they could celebrate the tercentenary of the greatest glory of English literature!

One who was present has thus described the scene:

"Having placed in the chair that particular Scotchman, who through the whole of a notable career has systematically sacrificed the

interests of England on every possible occasion, they came to the conclusion that, though nearly all our living poets are Englishmen, and might therefore be regarded as the inheritors of Shakespeare's spirit, a Scotch professor was the most suitable person to explain the beauties of our great English national poet; and, having thereby taken pains to eliminate everything distinctly English from the celebration, and to make it as repellent to the English temperament as possible, they rested from their labours." The war happily frustrated further effort.

England's literature has all through its history had to meet dynamic foreign influences, the changes of taste, the disloyalty of the critical faction, who ape universalism; the lack of state patronage. And it is combating—who knows with what chance of success?—these influences to-day; endeavouring here and there in sound, sane, lucid manifestations (such as will occur to many readers) to return to the quiet of its own mansion where the windows look out on ancient oaks and beeches, shaven lawn, and a chastened sky, where, within, the sea-coal burned so cheerfully and the mind was subdued to charity.

#### IV

England has never been a really artistic nation. It took her people centuries to achieve

even mediocrity in painting, sculpture, and music. To-day, in at least the two latter departments of art, it is doubtful if England has any special message to the world. Her domestic architecture, however, has been a model in all countries where comfort conjoined to charm is appreciated.

More nonsense has been talked and written in England on the subject of art than in any country on earth. It is some relief to know that it is to-day written mostly by imported critics. Ruskin's interminable divagations were one long adventure into the art, not of painting, but æsthetics—or was it dialectics?

"In matters of taste," comments the American essayist, Lowell, "the Anglo-Saxon mind seems always to have felt a painful distrust of itself, which it betrays either in an affectation of burly contempt or in a pretence of admiration equally insincere."

As in English colloquial speech the *mot juste* is shunned as pure affectation, so, in painting, decorative effect and scientific colour values are, with the masses, negligible as compared with the subject. And yet there has been, withal, a national sense of colour and form, inherent though unexpressed and perhaps inexpressible, which reveals itself in the harmony of the veritable English scene—a sense allied less to voluptuous aspiration which Continental artists feel, than to the national love for propriety.

“ The evidence is abundant and positive,” writes Dr. Jessop, after a sedulous examination of the records, “ that the work done upon the fabrics of our churches and the other work done in the beautifying of the interior of our churches, such as the wood carving of our screens, the painting of the lovely figures in the panels of those screens, the embroidery of the banners and vestments, the frescoes on the walls, the engraving of the monumental brasses, the stained glass in the windows, and all that vast aggregate of artistic achievements which existed in immense profusion in our village churches till the frightful spoliation of those who in the sixteenth century stripped them bare—all this was executed by local artists.”

It is probable that the repression or perversion of the English genius is responsible for the barrenness which succeeded the fecund Middle Ages. In the art of painting, not until the second half of the eighteenth century did any master painters appear ; but these proved to be as English as Shakespeare or the cliffs of Dover. The productions of Hogarth, Reynolds, Gainsborough, Romney, Morland, Constable, and Turner are as superior to those of the French painters in ease and strength and beauty as the general taste and apprehension for art of the English people was inferior to the French, or, indeed, any Continental people. England's higher level in painting was marked by a series

of lofty eminences flung up on the plain, and the beauty of these hillocks is emphasized by the prevailing flatness. Later there have come authentic masters of technique, but the great English painters ceased with Watts.

English painting of the Victorian period, deficient in inspiration though it be, lacking often in science, mediocre even, is in its content a generous and impressive revelation of the English spirit. Its charm is its Englishness, and its Englishness is irresistible throughout the universe. Even the French, who despite the technique and *genre*, confess to the seduction, avow themselves conquered. Nowhere has it been better expressed than by M. André Chevrillon, who visited a gallery of the works of English painters.

“One loves to contemplate them,” he writes; “one feels that one becomes better and stronger before them as before all that is harmonious, true, and good in its place in the scheme of things. They speak to us of the healthy life of the individual which, enclosing itself from infancy in its natural group, freely, in an environment of calm and beauty, with a shelter from ugliness and wickedness, enveloped and protected by illusion, following its hereditary instincts and the prejudices which sustain society of which it helps to form the substance, united to it, acting by it and for it, accomplishes its own

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development and remains beautiful as all the human beings who live well-balanced lives as regards themselves and their surroundings." \*

These are the feelings which all must experience before the landscapes and portraits, the subject-pieces and the allegories of those essentially Victorian painters whom it is the present fashion to decry. From a walk through the Tate Gallery one will carry away a far truer conception of the spirit of England than could be afforded by a lifetime of contemplation of the exotic productions of the new school of empirical painters in England.

• *Études Anglaises: La Peinture Anglaise.*

## CHAPTER XII

### ENGLAND AND LABOUR

But pamper not a hasty time,  
Nor feed with crude imaginings  
The herd, wild hearts and feeble wings,  
That every sophister can lime.

TENNYSON.

**I**T is curious to reflect that the English, now the laziest white race upon the planet, should for centuries have been the most industrious and have done more than any other nation to spread the gospel of honest toil and the dignity of manual labour.

England taught Scotland, Wales, and Ireland to work. As late as the middle of the eighteenth century the Scotch Lowlanders struck the English artisan who penetrated into that benighted country as a feckless race ; while the Highlanders reserved their physical energy chiefly for intensive carousing and cattle-lifting forays.

At a time when the English farmer and artisan were attacking their diurnal task with a zeal and persistence that scorned fatigue, transforming primeval England into a garden

and sending the products of English fields, looms, and forges overseas, other nations, though more populous, were content to take workaday life as it came, without sweat and without spirit. It was England that invented the phrase about "honest swink," "the dignity of labour," "he who delves longest sees farthest," "he who creates most is like God most"; it was in England, as one may see in her plays and ballads, that idleness was most scorned, reprobated, indeed, as one of the deadly sins; where the Scriptural injunction, "whatsoever thy hand find to do, do it with all thy might," was universally taken to heart.

Foreigners seeing Englishmen work were filled with amazement. The devil was in these men—"ils travaillent acharnement." An Englishman who felled trees could do the work of three Frenchmen. An Essex sheep-shearer worked from dawn to dusk and laughed lustily when Signor Baretti asked him if he was not tired. Sussex smiths trudged seven miles to the blast furnace each morning and seven miles home of an evening, and had enough energy left to dance on Sunday on the village green. "There is no fun like work," is the humorous maxim of a self-made American millionaire; the English labourer illustrated it centuries ago.

It was not climate or luck or natural skill which wrought the wealth of England, but simple hard work. The Englishman got up

early and seized his hammer or spade or bobbin or quill pen at an hour when his modern representative is still snoring between the blankets. Tradesmen took down their shutters at seven o'clock in the morning. Classes assembled in the grammar schools at 6.30. The working day—long as it was—was still not long enough for the stone-mason or the carpenter or the joiner who had a job on hand which he was eager to finish.

The old guilds made short work of lazy apprentices ; and the freemen held in particular detestation a "mean-spirited work-fellow"—a man who did not "put his back into his stint," who grumbled at or dawdled over his tools and did not labour with a will.

Then, towards the end of the nineteenth century, came an utter change in the spirit of the English workman. It may have been due to education, to increased prosperity, to the suspicions that his labour was being exploited by the capitalists. At any rate, with the rise of the Trade Unions came a growing distaste for work, which spread in all directions, and the advent of the Labour Party was coincident with a general aversion from labour.\*

\* The new Labour members in the House of Commons are often supposed to reveal the "working man" at last arrived : to be able to furnish a kind of selected sample of the English industrial populations. They may, perhaps, stand for the working man in opinion. The majority of them are certainly remote from him in characteristic. Many are Scotsmen ; and there is no deeper gulf than that which yawns between the Scotch and the English proletariat.—Wallas : *Our Social Heritage*.

To-day no longer is the Englishman, whether he work with his hands or his head, envied for his habits of industry ; his idleness has become a by-word all over the world. The English Trade Unions, chiefly directed by the Scotch, Welsh, and Irish (Messrs. Henderson, Macdonald, Smillie, Thomas, Hodge, O'Grady, and the rest), have been foremost in the van in their insistence on diminished hours of work and on diminished output of work. The zest of emulation has been all but crushed out, and in certain trades a maximum has been set to individual effort. Thus no workman may do more than a certain amount of work for a certain daily or hourly wage. A bricklayer must not lay more than 720 bricks a day, although capable of doing double or three times this amount of work. The strong, it is argued, must not make existence difficult for the weak. What it really means is that the competent workman is restrained by the incompetent. If a contractor wishes to engage competent workmen, he must apply to the Trades Union concerned. Should he seek for men outside it, no member of any Trades Union is suffered to work for him at all.

## II

It is possible to ascribe to other causes the great evil which has eaten into the heart of

industrial England. There is the gambling instinct, which has itself been fostered by high wages and the fluctuations of employment. Horse-racing, football, cricket, boxing, wrestling, once popular as sports only, are now largely means for winning comparatively large sums by artisans, labourers, clerks, shopmen and shop-girls, and domestic servants. The truth is prosperity has taken the English workman unawares; accustomed to a certain scale of effort and wages, he has not been able to adapt himself; he procures a livelihood on easier terms than are current in any other European country; he has not been taught to save; he does not know what to do with his money. For, compared with foreign workmen, he certainly does not really profit by his better bargain. As a German observer wrote fifteen years ago :

“ Considering that wages in England average 20 per cent. higher than in Germany, that the week has only 54 working hours, that all articles of food are cheaper, the fundamental conditions of prosperous home-life are all around more favourable in England than in Germany. And yet the British workman does not derive a greater comfort from them, for the simple reason that a German labourer's wife is more economical and more industrious than the English wife. Indeed, I should say that although the British workman works less

hours, pays less for his food, and earns more than the German, his standard of living is as a rule lower. I found the workmen in a well-appointed German factory better clothed and looking better fed than those in Sheffield, Birmingham, or London." \*

The same writer regarded as ominous the fact that previously the delight people used to take in honest work is more and more disappearing. "In both points the English, as a nation, are inferior to the Germans, and in those English circles which are most gifted with wise foresight, it is fully understood that Germany is England's real rival for supremacy among the nations of the world." He noticed an increasing disinclination to perform work which carried any implication of subservience. The cry of the Englishman was, "Let the damned foreigners do the dirty work."

"How long will other nations stand this? If they revolt, the whole structure will fall to pieces like the figure with the feet of clay, and glory will end in a general crash. For the great economical law is that whoever wants to live must work, and any one unit must not spend more than he creates by his work. Yet, an increasing objection to labour is noticeable right through the British nation. This opens the door for the victorious entry

\* Carl Peters: *England and the English*.

of German competition, for our people are essentially laborious and industrious."\*

In his latest play, Mr. Bernard Shaw makes his Englishman speak of the way in which England depends upon the foreigner :

" I grant you that we leave the troublesome part of the labour of the nation to them. And a good job, too ; why should we drudge at it ? But think of the activities of our leisure. Is there a jollier place to live in than England out of office-hours ? . . . The real life of England is from Friday to Tuesday."

To which the Archbishop (doubtless a Scotchman) replies :

" That is terribly true. In devising brainless amusements ; in pursuing them with enormous vigour, and taking them with eager seriousness, our English people are the wonder of the world."

The decline in national industry was spectacularly arrested by the war, when the whole nation put its heart and soul into the work of achieving victory. For a space of four years it was again the old England. Work became an ecstasy ; idleness a reproach. No task was too arduous or too humble not to attract swarms of votaries. The rewards were great, but more than money was a return of the

\* Carl Peters : *England and the English*.



old sense of accomplishment and the joy of emulation. Victory came ; and almost immediately the English nation fell back into the evil ways, the miserable shirking, the distrust of capital, the foolish demands that an industry should pay them more than the industry was worth to those who initiated and organized it ; and then, the criminal strikes, the menaces, and the feverish unrest, leading finally to such economic dislocation and unemployment on such a vast scale that two million idlers became pensioners on the bounty of the government. Then was the shameful spectacle seen of thousands of sturdy men and women refusing employment when it was offered, preferring to accept the dole of the richer and more industrious classes. No wonder that General Booth of the Salvation Army, who has spent his life amongst the industrial classes, should point out the grave consequences of this policy upon the character of the English workman :

“ One of the most serious dangers of the dole age in which we are living is the weakening of the self-respect and sturdiness of the work-people. To be paid to do nothing is, economically and socially, bad enough, but to be willing to be paid to do nothing—that is far worse. It denotes a moral decline rapidly descending to ruin. No doubt in the main it is the extremists amongst the unions who are loudest

in their claims for this kind of pay, but if they succeed, even on a relatively small scale, they will quickly infect great masses, both of men and women, who are not very vigorous just now, and who it may easily take years to recover to a better state of mind."

Why, he asked, were these idle, work-shy multitudes not put upon the roads, to afforestation, to the reclamation of waste land—which were crying out for labour? Left as they were, their idleness would become inveterate.

### III

The truth is, the English labourer has lost his zest for labour—he has come to hate labour because his own labour no longer interests him. Labour has become too intensive, too mechanical; apply himself never so earnestly and skilfully, he is no better off than the indifferent workman. The fruits of his toil are scarcely superior to the fruits enjoyed by the idler. His mind is filled with tales of greedy capitalists—of ruthless profiteers. Why should he work to fill other people's pockets? Besides, during the war, he had had a taste of the larger, cheerfuller, more varied industrial life, and he turned now with loathing from unintermittent drudgery.

"During the war," states Mr. Graham Wallas, "we were able both to maintain a

huge army in the field and to multiply by perhaps two or three our national production of certain forms of wealth. And, in spite of universal anxiety, insufficiency of food, and long hours, most of those who worked under the new conditions seem to have felt something like zest in their work—more than was common in British working-class life before the war. Most of the Trade Unions submitted to this process, because they shared the general recognition of the national crisis ; but it was clear that the effective force which brought it about came rather from the political organization of the nation than from its vocational organization.”

“ It had been interesting,” testifies a distinguished ex-officer, “ during the war to see how quickly men took to the soldier’s life. Man’s evolution was the evolution of a fighter—that is, the evolution of rhythmic activity, fierce effort followed by rest pauses. Even when he turned to agriculture there was a seasonal variation of effort and slackness.” He had noticed, that all through the war men whistled and sang at their tasks, and even when going from task to task. They did not whistle when going to regular work at regular hours.

“ This clash between modern industrialism and human nature is of great importance. Industrial medicine has as one of its objects the mitigation of it. Doctors, indeed, are

pointing the way to physiological methods of work so that output might be increased. The present economic conditions makes hard work absolutely necessary for all."

In consequence, Captain Elliot, M.P., puts forth the view that continuous hard work is probably not in accord with man's physiology. The body works by fits and starts, in a rhythm which can be determined. Continuous hard work, on the other hand, with regular hours, is a modern development. It is an experiment, and it is not yet certain that the experiment will succeed.

Still another observer points out that the motives for work which have hitherto prevailed in the world have been want, ambition, and love of occupation. Love of occupation, although it occasionally accompanies and cheers every sort of labour, could never induce men originally to undertake arduous and uninteresting tasks, certainly not men with the race-experience and "race-memory" of Englishmen. Inclination, therefore, can never be the general motive for the work now imposed on the masses. Before labour can be its own reward it must become less continuous, more varied, more responsive to individual temperament and capacity. Otherwise, so runs the conclusion, it would not cease to repress and warp human faculties.

## IV

Everywhere in England the labouring classes are demanding that "ecstasy without which life is a bitter confinement of the soul."

"A traveller," observes one of the younger English writers, "journeying through that country which is most proud of being democratic, Great Britain, would perceive the impossibility of acknowledging the claim as he saw the huddled streets and houses in which for the most part the people live. He would know the impossibility of self-discipline in people denied beauty, air, health, privacy, social intercourse, civic pride; and condemned from week to week to a monotony of toil by which they are drilled into the uniformity of subservience."

"Increasing consciousness of change has produced a frenzy of invention, and still men lag behind because they have not yet learned that the world they live in is a spiritual structure, a soul in which an infinite number of souls are built together, that life and death are but architectonic principles, and that the great building of the soul is contained in and inspired with infinite love." \*

What does the future hold out for the masses of Englishmen? Is there hope that the time will come when through machinery

\* Gilbert Cannan: *The Anatomy of Society*, 1921.

and mechanical appliances and labour-saving inventions there shall be no further need for muscular labour, when the sweat of a man's brow shall be wrung from him, as it is now from tens of thousands, only by athletic sports, when his coal and gold and silver shall be vomited from the bowels of the earth, and its fruits issue forth at the behest of machines and be governed by machines, and his concrete dwellings arise with no more effort of nerve and muscle than a child may use with its toys, which, when once built, will remain as eternal as the Pyramids?

If so, what effect will that have on the moral and spiritual nature of man in general?

Work even now is not everywhere necessary to life. It is possible for whole communities to live without labour. There are tropical races whose wants are supplied by nature almost for the asking.

But it is inconceivable that there can ever be amongst white men—amongst Englishmen—any eager spiritual life, any healthy emulation, any pride in skill, any joy in strength and manhood, without the exercise of the will and the body, without the overcoming of obstacles and the mastery of natural conditions.

Although England has been drained by emigration and the war of a vast proportion of her best stock, there remains to her a reserve of power and goodwill which must be educed by other methods. The regular drudgery of

mass production, without any direct corresponding profit to the worker, must be promptly replaced by emulation and co-operation.

Wherever economic co-operation has been put into practice it has succeeded in stimulating production and profits. Above all, the fantastic conception—fostered by the film representations of ten thousand acre wheatfields and sky-scrapers forty stories high—of England as a small, over-crowded, necessarily effete country—must be eradicated from the minds of young Englishmen. Comparisons based on geographical area are ludicrous. The English workman must be brought face to face with realities, and chief amongst these realities is the fact that England is still on the whole a bare, undeveloped, half-peopled tract, and that until every acre is cultivated, every aptitude enfranchized, every beneficent invention exploited, until every man and woman again feels in his soul the ecstasy of industry, England is still a land in the making.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE EFFEMINATION OF ENGLAND

The preponderance of women as a result of the war threatens a social debasement perhaps worse by far than any previous historic disaster, and that, as civilization is high or low, according as women are at a premium or at a discount, a coming discount of women is imminently threatened, and is, indeed, an accelerating process.—PROF. GEDDES.

The deep anti-social offence of the "suffragettes" with their hatchets and hunger-strikes was that they gave away in some measure, the bluff by which non-criminal people had hitherto kept some control over reluctant assentors to the rule of mutual protection and forbearance.

**C**ENTURIES ago England furnished an ideal of tender and gracious womanhood to the world, to which the poets of every land vowed fealty. A whole volume would not suffice to contain the tributes which have been paid by foreigners to the physique, the bearing, the modesty, the devotion, the virtue, the intelligence, the frankness, good-sense, and wholesomeness of Englishwomen. One finds the true Englishwoman embodied in the characters of Portia and Rosalind; she confronts us often in the gallery of Shakespeare's heroines. We see her later in Sophia Western, Olivia Primrose and Dorothy Vernon, in the novels of



Jane Austen, in the poetry of Tennyson, in the paintings of Leighton, in the drawings of du Maurier. How conspicuous she is in the *dramatis personæ feminae* of George Meredith and Henry James!

The whole world knows and admires the ideal Englishwoman. But, alas! ideals are rare in the flesh. There are millions of Englishwomen; and the twentieth-century type is a being far different from the antique model. Yet it is this Englishwoman of to-day who has achieved a mighty miracle—who has assumed, over her short and graceless skirt, the *toga virilis*.

In the case of England, the wonder is all the greater in that the visible, articulate Englishwomen of the twentieth century, who have thus imposed their will on Englishmen, are by no means the women their mothers were. Nor, in spite of their success, are they superior to their sisters in other countries. A candid observer would say that they appear, on the whole, less technically and industrially efficient than the French or German women, less alert and adaptable than the Americans, less intensely feminine than the Italian or Spanish women. One would say, scrutinizing a crowd of two or three thousand of the sex in Hyde Park or in Manchester, or passing an equal number of them in review at Blackpool or Brighton, or visiting scores of them as a social or political canvasser anywhere in the

Kingdom, that they were, in the mass, in carriage and appearance and character, undeniably commonplace and ineffectual, while the same time not denying them the feminine virtues, those amiable tendernesses, weaknesses, and deficiencies which characterize their sex, which, perhaps, they possess in greater abundance than the women of other countries.

No revolution that has been accomplished in England is comparable to this ; and yet it is characteristic of Englishmen that they have taken it quietly, without very much comprehension of its vastness and its tremendous implications.

How was this miracle achieved ?

If the War proved anything, it proved anew the stark fallacy of the equality of the sexes. Physical force rules the world to-day as much as it did in the days of the cave-dwellers. Physical force and stability will, so far as we can see, always rule the world. A nation that cannot fight for its freedom will perish. As a great ancillary force of munition makers, nurses, car drivers, and clerks, women rendered valuable service to the armies in the field, but in doing this they only continued to perform the functions which they have always performed for the men-folk. There was here no particular extension of their utility. They well fulfilled their natural rôle of ministrant to man. Were the battles of the world to be won by preparation, conservation, ministration,

and maintenance, then women as well as men would win battles. But these services are only secondary and supplementary. Granted that they help to win wars in the long run, wars involve battles, and the shock of battle is borne by one sex. The Great War was exclusively directed by men and fought by men, and the roll of 900,000 dead British men and 112 women (inadvertently slain) speaks for itself.

Upon what, then, do women found their claim that the late War demonstrated an equality with men—a war which merely confirmed anew their inferiority, their inherent incapacity to defend their country?

No; the War did not subvert any previously held opinion about the disability of women. It merely served as an excuse for conceding them the suffrage which a considerable number claimed. This privilege would have been conceded had there been no Great War. There was a ferment within the Commonwealth which could not much longer be repressed. England alone of the countries of the world had for decades suffered from one of the most serious organic disturbances which can afflict a nation—a plethora of women. It was not a question of quality, but quantity.

## II

In a social organism where all the forces are evenly balanced and adjusted, the undue

proportion of any ingredient must threaten the healthy functioning of the whole. One thinks of a machine fitted with a wheel-shaft or piston, whose bulk not only is disproportionate to the other equally essential parts, but impedes their effective action. There are two master principles in all nature—the male and the female. We know little as yet of the profound and inscrutable causes of sex-determination. What we do see is the most wonderful of all the phenomena relating to human life—the almost exact parity of the sexes. In one family there are five boys and three girls ; in another there are five girls and three boys. We see nature always redressing the balance. In China, after a famine, more males are born than females ; after a rich harvest, more females than males.

It is impossible to believe that the upsetting of this balance from which flow all the actions and qualities of any given nation or society should not affect its general character. Each of the prime natural forces possesses a specific function. Each force reacts upon and controls the other. Yet a nation is said to become effeminate, not because there are more women than men, but when the attributes which distinguish the female are acquired by the male population—when the customs and habits which are proper to the women are assumed by the men. As both principles are necessary, may one not infer that the qualities generated by

both principles are necessary to a nation,—that in proportion as the muliebrity of the one sex declines, the virility of the other also lessens, in an endeavour to adjust the moral machine?

Observe what happens in an individual household. The loss of courage or initiative in the husband is compensated by the abnormal force and self-reliance of the wife. We may readily picture a family or tribe whose collective value was impaired by the death or injury of all the males, being fortified by the accession of masculine courage and initiative on the part of the females. All men and women have inherent and latent qualities in common, the exercise and the exact adjustment of which is necessary for the well-being of the race. Granted virility and muliebrity each to exist in its due proportion, it would be unnecessary for either sex to display any of the qualities of its opposite.

To what cause must we ascribe the fact that in England to-day it is not merely tragic circumstance and calamity which has destroyed the balance between the sexes, but Nature herself? For even in 1911 there were over a million more women than men, and the disparity enormously accelerated by the war, continues to increase rapidly.

Is not this rapid rise in the numerical proportion of women correlated to the pioneering work of Englishmen overseas during the century, when, as is known, the best and

sturdiest stock adventured, enlisted, or emigrated, and the weaker remained behind?

There are no statistics telling us how many young unmarried men left the shores of England each year since 1851. But if we computed these as at an average of only 30,000 a year, it would sufficiently account for a loss in manhood which has not been made up by the ratio of births.

The increased disparity of 1921, compared with the census of 1911, is largely represented by the huge losses in men of the English in the war.

England, then, is actually confronted by a surplus of nearly two million females, the consequence of Nature's failure to replace the two million males who, but for emigration and death on the battlefield, would now be in existence.

Can it be that this replacement has been and is being made, and that the world at large—save only the Continental caricaturists—do not yet recognize it?

For there is yet another solution of the effemination of England—so startling that one would hesitate to mention it were it not supported by sound genetical authority. Briefly—sex is not absolute: it is a matter of degree. There are feminine men and masculine women—forming an inter-sexual type, and it is the growth of this type in England under modern conditions which is represented by

the two million surplus "women" who figure on the Registrar-General's list. It is the womanly woman—the potential mother—who, of more uneven metabolism, requires to be sheltered and who is unable to compete with man. It is she who is the ideal Englishwoman of the past and, let us hope, of the present and future. The others really belong to a third sex. As a reviewer of a recent work on this subject, *Taboo and Genetics*, cannot forbear to remark: "Female policemen and man-milliners ought to be recruited from the inter-sexual types." \*

### III

The numerical preponderance of women over men must result in a greater industrial activity of women; that is a logical necessity if women are to be housed, fed, and clothed at their own and not man's expense. They must penetrate more and more into regions hitherto solely occupied by man—the economic contingency is obvious and imminent.

But that is not the real danger to such a compact and insular nation as the English.

A correlative of a preponderance of women is the ascendancy of qualities characteristic of women. The State is permeated by too strong a dose of effeminacy. We know what

\* Some months ago a female politician wrote to the *Times* suggesting the abolition of the term "sex." "Let us in future," she said in substance, "speak of the Fighting and the non-Fighting class."

manners owe to woman. Civilized man must be ever mindful of the refining influence which woman has exerted in civilization. But while the decoration and lubrication of society is so largely the work of women, there are deeper, stronger forces at work by which the bases of society are built and protected. There are instincts and judgments, inherited codes of governance, appetites and aptitudes, sanctions and inhibitions, the very body and texture of the male, which, not to possess, detracts from the masculine nature, and in so far retards the development and destiny of man.

Reluctantly one quotes Nietzsche in these days; but there are falser things in his philosophy than his judgment upon modern woman, in whom he finds

“so much pedantry, superficiality, petty assumption, laxity, and indiscretion concealed. . . . Her great art is falsehood, her chief concern is appearance and beauty. . . . That which inspires respect in woman and enough fear also, is her nature, which is more ‘natural’ than that of man . . . her genuine, carnivora-like, cunning flexibility, her *naïveté* in egoism, her untrainableness and innate wildness, the incomprehensibleness, extent, and deviation of her desires and virtues.”

It is not flattering; he might be describing a modern politician. . . .

To sum up: one notes with misgiving the



increasing permeation throughout England of a spirit which is not masculine. One sees it in the caprice and vacillation of the direction of public affairs, in the shrinking from stern and decisive measures, in literature and art, the drama and the public press, where the "Woman's Column" of a quarter of a century has so encroached upon the space of some newspapers that it now seems to embrace the political leading articles. Effeminacy asserts itself most shrilly in commerce, which now ministers on a colossal scale to the excessive vanity and ornamentation of women. If all these manifestations of luxury and laxity, idleness and prodigality are not effeminate, as compared with the old traditional qualities of the English race, then observation and deduction are wasted, and John Bull, and not the wife of a certain ex-Prime Minister, is still a valid generic figure for the English nation.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE ENGLISH PRESS

The Press is a mighty engine, but it is not necessary that it should move on its mission thunderously, shaking the earth, wounding the unwary, startling the timid and offensive to the eye and ear; but rather make its progress on smooth rails, silently, with no more smoke or vapour than is to be expected from such an engine.—PALMERSTON.

**A** FRENCHMAN can understand many things English and can explain away many seeming advantages which they display over his own of the same class; but a copy of the *Times* imposes silence; in that direction there is an end of the argument.

Its very size is baffling. It is not enough to say that the English newspapers reflect the public intelligence. A scrap of common tin reflects the human countenance; but a maker of mirrors would hardly consider this optical property alone as constituting an authentic mirror. Some regard must be had to material, size, polish, and setting. A small mirror, however bright, can only render a limited simulacrum of a large object. Even a cheval glass if improperly prepared would be

ineffectual. And a large newspaper can only faithfully reflect a large society if it is first skilfully compounded of appropriate materials and, above all, if it is lucid.

Perhaps the first thing that strikes a Frenchman or a German or an Italian about the English daily newspaper is its mere content. But that is not at all the quality which impresses an American. What does impress him is a certain moral weight and reserve, the notion which each issue imparts of being the product of a responsible tradition. He notes the presence of a special character quite separate from the character of the persons, however brilliant, who may happen to write for it. The old English rule of anonymity made for the strength and influence of this impersonal force, inherent on the great organs, not of public opinion, or private opinion—except in so far as their correspondence columns were concerned—but of opinion in the abstract. It was opinion generated ritually in an inner shrine and delivered oracularly. And it was opinion observing certain laws of nature—English nature—adapted to a certain outlook, certain prejudices, and prepossessions consistently held by this or that particular newspaper. It was this which constituted the strength of the great English journal of the nineteenth century, and it is this which still makes the most admired characteristic of the English journals of the twentieth.

## II

But there has grown up within the past quarter of a century another sort of press, supported by another public, and exercising another sort of power. Journalism has become frankly commercial : a kind of shop-keeping, in which window-dressing is important and in which a large turnover is regarded as essential to larger profits.

The *Times*, as every other journal, has to see its columns profaned and vulgarized by the intrusion of matter in the wrong place. If the æsthetic sense is not outraged by the juxtaposition of the pictorial announcement of some dressmaker or soap-boiler with the obituary notice of a statesman or an essay on Einstein, it is because of the hardening effect of custom. Posterity will regard this phenomenon with different eyes. It robs the journal of its dignity, of any pretence to literary unity. It is as if a malicious urchin were to scrawl a slang couplet across a dignified official proclamation. How can the mind retain its concentration and singleness, if it is asked at the same time and in adjoining columns suavely in the one and stridently in the other to consider the details of female underclothing and an exposition of the pragmatic philosophy of William James ?

On the other hand, it might be held that a truly catholic mind perceives no incongruity,

if the contents of a newspaper are tested by the canon of human interest. *Humani nihil a me alienum puto*. It is only a false convention that makes a pill or a corset seem less important than a sermon or a play. Beecham may be a greater benefactor than Bernard Shaw and Céleste than Dean Inge.

### III

But such Chestertonian reasoning, if carried into practice, would make life, what indeed it is fast becoming, a welter of warring obsessions. What the human mind wants, and especially the English mind wants, is harmony and simplicity. Iteration, the watchword of the advertiser, not only distracts the mind inopportunely, but is an artistic sin.

One regrets the whole principle and practice of modern advertising, not only because, in spite of all the apologetics and sophisms of its professors, it rests demonstrably upon a false economic basis, and because it is opposed to the consumer's interest, but for æsthetic reasons. If it is admittedly wrong for a pill-maker to disfigure a waterfall or a public monument, it is equally wrong for him to deface a great newspaper.

Suppose—and it is no very extravagant supposition; the cinema theatres have already been experimenting in this direction—during a performance of *Hamlet* after each principal

scene a young woman in modern attire were to come tripping down to the front of the stage and cry out, "This costume to be had at Freeman and Debenbody's for five guineas," or a stout rosy fellow garbed like a *chef de cuisine* were to appear and shout, "Black and Crosswell's tinned soups are the best"—would it assist the comprehension and enjoyment of the drama?

Yet one may be sure of this: if such a thing were to happen and become conventional, there would be people, perhaps a great many people, who would retort that they were not at all troubled about the comprehension and enjoyment of Shakespeare; what they wanted in the theatre was to be entertained, and that if the Freeman and Debenbody girl were pretty and the Black and Crosswell intruder amusing they were welcome to come on and 'brighten things up a bit.' And more surely would they take this point of view if these commercial interpolations resulted in a substantial lowering of the price of seats at the theatre.

The truth is, and it must be recognized, the public taste of the English masses in these matters is very much below the standard of public taste in France, Germany, and the Continent generally, as it is still higher than public taste in America, and is growing worse proportionately to the efforts made by interested persons to worsen it. When those who might be the leaders of public taste and

opinion themselves are tempted by commercial considerations to betray the public it makes the efforts of the reformers very hard indeed. For how, except through the press, can they make their voice heard ?

#### IV

The difference between the London *Standard* and the New York *Journal* of a generation ago was the difference between a High Church congregation and a gathering of Ohio Baptist Revivalists, between a play of Shakespeare and a modern revue, between a picture by Leighton and a picture by a Futurist. In the one nothing can happen that has not already happened ; in the other, of any category, anything can happen, and more specially can it happen and is expected to happen if it has never happened. One was the outcome of precedents and principles ; its whole system was based on rule and a respect for order. In the case of the old *Standard* (whose leading articles were written by the Poet Laureate) the conductors gave very little thought to current volatile chatter or passing opinions or vulgar tastes and weaknesses. Their business was to chronicle the functioning of the great political and social machine according to a valuation of each part in its relation to the whole so carefully considered and widely accepted as to be technical.

For instance, the doings in Parliament might be dull : they might interest very few, half, the feminine half of the public, not at all ; but anything that a prominent member of Parliament might choose to say was worth listening to courteously and recording deliberately. Speeches by royalty, peers, and eminent statesmen were rendered according to a scale kept in the editor's office, and not according to any radical ideas of intrinsic merit in their utterances. A man might murder his mistress or his maiden aunt, and this species of crime had its technical news importance : but no reader of the *Standard* ever expected that the criminal's personality, his antecedents, or the sordid details of his crime were to be dished up in a great newspaper for the delectation of vulgar sensation-lovers, people who read with avidity the novels of Zola and Gaboriau. Why, the editor might have asked, publish this stuff because it has undergone the cheap formality of taking place ? The function of a newspaper was not to " cater for the public," but to observe and inculcate the proprieties of life, even when chronicling its improprieties ; to fulfil a moral duty to the great body of its readers by keeping itself always on the plane of the respectable, the serious, the incurious, and the few.

I have cited the old *Standard*—any of the great newspapers of the period would have served—merely to mention that with the entry

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of the new exponents of journalism and a totally different conception of a newspaper's relations to its public, the *Standard* perished. The other established journals did not share its fate, although they suffered a decline for some years; they bowed before the revolution, making popular concessions here and there, but managing to retain, despite surface changes, their fundamental character. What these journals set out to cultivate was humanity. Their deliverances were no longer considered *ex cathedra*. The *Times* is a far more lively and engaging newspaper than it used to be, because it is affected to a far greater extent than before by the views and tastes of a single man, and that man the most eminent apostle of the exotic school of journalism. At the same time I think it may easily be proved that Lord Northcliffe has changed the *Times* far less than the *Times* has changed Lord Northcliffe. One picks up this splendid journal (whose influence it is the fashion to decry, but of which every Englishman is, often secretly, proud) to find that its historic sense of values of mundane affairs is as intact as ever—that the discovery of a fifth-century Greek codex or a Shelley letter is still a stirring event, that a good poem is finer tidings to the world than a prize-fight, and that the opinions of hoary veterans like Mr. Frederic Harrison still out-class in mere “news value” those of Mr. Charles Chaplin.

But then the *Times* is so vast—equivalent to a 300 page octavo volume in fine type every week day throughout the year—that it and the *Daily Telegraph* can easily, like a monster hotel, find room and entertainment for everybody. This solves many problems which daily confront the editors of *Le Figaro*, the *Berliner Tageblatt*, and the *New York Times*. Yet its chief value to-day, what places it at the head of the world's newspapers, is less its admirable news service than its being the vehicle *par excellence* for the views of distinguished personages. An honour next to being heard in Parliament is to be read as a letter-writer in the *Times*.

While the London *Times* is one of the most important national institutions, an even more characteristically English newspaper in these days is the *Daily Telegraph*, with a content scarcely inferior, which makes no pretence of being intellectual or smart, whose columns breathe the English spirit of loyalty, moderation, good nature, and common sense. Whether one worships in that particular congregation or not, one recognizes that the service and the altar are truly English and orthodox, and it is reassuring that, notwithstanding the caprice and vulgarity of popular taste, such a journal as the *Daily Telegraph* persists and flourishes. The *Morning Post* also keeps to its old character while making still fewer concessions to volatility and the urgency of the advertiser,

and so does the *Manchester Guardian* and other of the provincial newspapers. On the other hand, the London journals of the largest circulation are generally smaller, frankly American in general character and make-up, and might be published in New York without oversetting local canons in the least. Yet it must be said that amongst much triviality they occasionally publish utterances, which, if necessarily fragmentary, are valuable contributions to the formation of an intelligent public opinion. But the trail of the advertiser is over them all.

## V

The whole question of publicity is a disturbing one, for it is a disease which has infected other than newspapers, although the press is the theatre of their pathological phenomena. *Publicitis* is an importation from America, of which every decent American is becoming heartily ashamed, and it has attacked John Bull virulently. No reader of an English newspaper, hardly even of the highest, has now any sort of assurance that the remarks of or the occurrences connected with the life of this individual or that institution do not emanate from a private press bureau, where they are manufactured expressly for the purpose of persuading or misleading the public. Cabinet ministers now have their paid "boosters" and "boomsters," and a publicity

expert is appurtenant to several government departments.

Well may the foreigner, despairing of finding a true standard of values in English public affairs and English society which is not factitious, return Thackeray's old reproach against France : *La vérité—où le diable va-t-elle nicher ?*

One regrets the disappearance of such characteristically English journals as the evening *Westminster Gazette*, the *St. James's Gazette*, and the *Globe*. Much of their individuality and spirit survive in the two evening newspapers which still command the support of a public able to discriminate and occasionally to think. The *Pall Mall Gazette* is hardly less alert and scintillating than when it was edited by Stead.

In weekly journalism England is equally in advance, intellectually, of any other country. The *Spectator* is to-day what it was—courteous, suave, mildly pontifical. Many still miss the dignity and authority of the old *Athenæum* ; but in the Literary Supplement of the *Times* is found as great an impartiality, as sound scholarship, and much more brilliancy than I ever found in the *Athenæum*. *Punch* is in a class by itself : and as a national institution is only second to the *Times*. The benign spirit of England—good-nature, fair play, tolerance—is manifest in every issue of *Punch*.

The superiority of England in her monthly and quarterly reviews is still unchallengeable.

In size, variety of contents, and in the authoritative character of the contributors, such reviews as the *XIXth Century*, the *Fortnightly*, and the *Contemporary*, *inter alia*, are a pattern to the world. It is perhaps odd that the English public have never supported an illustrated monthly magazine comparable to the American publications; but as these latter are largely written and illustrated by English authors and artists, and follow an old English tradition, they seem in tone and spirit far more English than American. The English illustrated weeklies are certainly an English invention: they are sumptuously produced and are diffused all over the earth.

On the whole, even though there are tendencies which cause one misgivings, England has reason to be proud of her press—whether it be of the newspaper or periodical, or of the issue of scientific and philosophical works on the part of the Universities and of public-spirited publishers. She has made through them, and still is making, a living contribution to the intelligence and civilization of the world. One sees an appreciation of culture and a sense of literary form everywhere increasingly evident, if there is not quite as much of the quality of responsibility as of old. The culture may be cloaked a little too brightly, in order to tickle the fancy of the masses, but it is there and more abundantly than any other nation can show.

## CHAPTER XV

### ENGLISH AGRICULTURE

The improvement of the ground is the most natural obtaining of riches, for it is our great mother's blessing, the earth : but it is slow : and yet where men of great wealth do stoop to husbandry, it multiplieth riches exceedingly.—BACON.

**R**ATHER less than half a century ago England—whose prototype was a farmer, who, more than any other nation, had uncovered the secrets of the soil, who had taught the world good husbandry—yielded her agricultural supremacy. For the best part of a century, between 1688 and 1760, England had been a wheat-exporting country. In 1840 she could even keep pace with the increase of her population and could grow wheat for twenty-four million people.

In the middle of the century when English agriculture reached its zenith, the relative yield from the soil was greater than that of any other country. England was the world's master farmer, and her methods were eagerly studied on the spot and adopted by foreigners. To-day it is only in respect to the quality of her live-stock that she has anything to teach the foreign farmer. In the course of forty years

or so, three and a half million acres have passed from arable to grass—and in spite of the enormous increase of the urban population, there are 250,000 fewer men on the land.

With a population of forty millions England only grows food for sixteen millions. She finds herself in the abject position of requiring the world to feed her in exchange for goods which other nations show an increasing disinclination to take on her own terms, and has thus created for herself a dangerous and precarious position.

A population which is wholly reliant upon manufactures must produce an unstable state whose fiscal and industrial prosperity is at the mercy of fluctuating trade conditions affecting employment and markets. But its instability would be deeper and more dangerous than this. It would involve the entire mentality, as well as the physique, of the race. If the process of rural depopulation of the past half-century were to continue, the people would be cut off from their origins—divorced from the soil. England would become a parasite: dependent entirely for its sustenance upon other organisms. When the connection between any parasite and its host is severed, it is the parasite which dies.

The fatal decline in England's primary industry synchronized with her cosmopolitan preoccupations—with her overseas Imperial activities, with her assumption of the rôle of universal philanthropist. The partial cultivation of distant prairie and veld seemed more

alluring than the intensive cultivation of England. The invasion of foreign markets appeared better than the exploitation of her own. "Cheap food" was the cry; those who raised it, but not those who profited by it, forgetting the corollary of "cheap labour" and that further corollary, demonstrated during the war, of "uncertain food."

The competition of the new countries bore heavily on English agriculture: land went out of tillage, farmers became bankrupt and their sons went abroad or joined the ranks of the urban toilers, and before the downward movement could be arrested £1,000,000,000 of capital had been swept away.

The reason why rural England did not become a desert has nothing to do with economics—the explanation is social, dating back to feudal times. To the mere ownership of land was attached a social prestige. The term landlord was surrounded by a body of traditions of authority, of luxury, and political power. A man might own St. Paul's Cathedral or the National Gallery together with its contents, but not owning the site in simple fee he was inferior to the master of a thousand acres in Westmorland. True, out of deference to his wealth, even he was dubbed "landlord," and so to-day are a million other mere house-owners and lessees who do not own a rood of land.

There were the landed classes and the others—the landless. Nobody so much as



mentioned land-poverty, a state in which the nominal owner of 10,000 acres of land cannot command the unencumbered cash income of a fairly prosperous stockbroker's clerk. There was some occult virtue in the possession of mere acres which has long since excited the amused wonder of an American or Colonial, upon whom the ownership of 10,000 acres of land confers less social distinction than the ownership of its equivalent value in railway shares.

## II

So, although land in England did not pay, it did not thereby become valueless. If land in America or Canada does not actually "pay" it has only a "waiting" value—and is held reluctantly until the time comes when it does pay. But there was a period in England when land was the only sound thing to invest in: the only thing that seemed solid, substantial, and could not fly away. It conferred privileges. The first step to being made a lord by the King was to make a veritable landlord of yourself. Merchants who had grown rich in trade proceeded to invest in land, and after having become country gentlemen, to buy more land, to "lay farm to farm" and so, as the old yeoman class was forced to sell, gradually squeeze out that class until it was nearly extinct. For it must never be forgotten that

at the end of the seventeenth century half the total occupiers of land in England were occupying owners, *i.e.* yeomen.

Before the nineteenth century not only the yeoman but the labourer had a direct interest in the land. There were vast expanses of "common land" over which he had common rights of pasturage and even of tillage. The interest of the new race of landlords was not only to squeeze out the yeomen, but to exclude the labourers from any direct proprietary concern in the soil; and this end was effected by the passage of the Enclosure Acts. Between 1790 and 1850 not fewer than 7,000,000 acres of land in the Kingdom were enclosed. To-day a great landowner can bring himself to confess :

"Not only was the enclosing of common land a great injustice to the labouring class : it was unsound from the social and political points of view ; the daily fare of the labourer was adversely affected, and all direct and independent interest in the land was removed and the agricultural labourer was forced into the ranks of the landless proletariat." \*

Yet when the landowning aristocracy had thus got the land, they were unable to do anything with it. They did not expect it to yield what any other form of investment would yield. They were not agriculturists : they were merely

\* Christopher Turnour : *The Land and its Problems*, 1921.

squires and country gentry who had turned England into a delightful playground.

So it has come to pass that landlords with their game and farmers with their ignorance do just what they please with the soil of England. No political party dare bring in a bill for the compulsory cultivation of the land on scientific lines—to administer this vitally important department of the national life in a national way. The sole anxiety of England's rulers, as one of them admitted to the late Mr. Hyndman, is "to keep the present system going."

The retirement at last of the great English landlords—and many of the lesser ones—and the break-up and sale of their estates might be supposed to effect a profound change in the situation. But the owners who supplant them, unless the estates are very much broken up indeed, are still the newly-rich who seek social security and consequence, and are content to go on in the old way with sporting preserves and pasture and have no desire to come into fresh conflict with labour conditions, such as might be entailed by a vigorous agricultural policy.

Not only to rural England is the passing of the old families a great blow, because with all their *laissez-faire* and feudal pretensions they and their beautiful buildings and parks were an asset to the nation. They served to redress the balance between rural and urban life. The castle, hall, and manor were rallying-places for

the people of the countryside who will not be disposed to give to Sir Herbert Higgs or Sir Montagu Finkelstein the loyalty and personal affection they gave their predecessors. And it is just possible, as time goes on, that Higgs and Finkelstein will find that they have made a bad bargain—that the game of being country gentlemen is not worth the candle.

### III

“I am not,” once declared a youthful patrician, to the merriment of the House of Commons, “I am not an agricultural labourer.”

It never occurred, even to Mr. Jesse Collings, to look behind this supercilious jest to the tragedy of it—to ask the speaker sternly why he was *not* an agricultural labourer—why he or any of his like should own productive land, keeping it in vast parks and pasture or rented out to a race of ignorant cultivators, withholding from England literally her birth-right of bread while foreign nations heaped up their agricultural riches and made themselves secure against the evil days which were coming. *Why* was he not an agricultural labourer?

“The improvement of the ground,” said Bacon, “is the most natural obtaining of riches, for it is our great mother’s blessing, the earth: but it is slow: and yet *when men of*

*great wealth do stoop to husbandry, it multiplieth riches exceedingly."*

Englishmen are proud of "roughing it" overseas—of personally working huge ranches—of putting huge sums into American and Colonial enterprises; but how few there are even now who throw their whole heart and soul and brains and capital into making England fertile and productive and safe against hunger. There were some great and stalwart farmers in England from old Jethro Tull to Coke of Norfolk, but all their zeal and enthusiasm and their practical achievements were, long before the end of the last century, merely a source of inspiration to foreigners and Colonial farmers. True, about 1904 there came a welcome change. There was a revival in agriculture: prices went up, and even before the war young energetic Englishmen were turning to agriculture.

But how—even with the revived interest—is the lost leeway to be made up? How are the men—or their children—who left the land to be got to return to it? In the old days of agricultural depression, England became land-ignorant. Other nations—notably America, Germany, Denmark, and Belgium—not only encouraged the small owner—the yeomen—but tapped every resource of science to get the most out of the land and to distribute the product by a highly organized system.

What a deadly handicap it is in England that one man should own the land and another cultivate it! Up to 1914 88 per cent. of the occupiers of agricultural land were tenants: 12 per cent. only were occupying owners. Compare this state of affairs with Denmark, where the relative situation is exactly reversed.

Consequently, in 1914 the gross production from the land was back again to the figures of 1814. The decrease in the men employed upon the land was equally disastrous, although in every other country the numbers of farmers had increased, notwithstanding the immense growth of urban industry.

Owing to England having been bereft of so many of the most vigorous and enterprising of her rural population, the temperament and equipment of those now on the land do not make for progress. The majority, as has been said, "regard their occupation as providing a living rather than as a means of making money which can be extended and developed." Capital and brains are wanted to make land-owning and land-working the profitable business it might be made.

If England were cultivated as Germany or Denmark are cultivated, she could produce five times what she produces to-day. Belgium is *par excellence* an industrial country, yet were England to produce on the same scale that Belgium's 4,000,000 acres yield, the value of her crops would be increased sixfold.

## IV

England has made many epochal contributions to universal agriculture. She invented the four-year-rotation of crops which revolutionized farming. She was the first to take up the scientific breeding of cattle. English pedigree live-stock—whether it be horses, cattle, sheep, or pigs—is still the source and origin of the best strains to be found on the farms of the world. It is to England that the Colonial or foreign breeder still comes for the very foundation of his business and for the replenishment of his flocks and herds. England's export has gone to improve the economical position of her rivals. She invented the Co-operative movement which has made the fortunes of every farming country but her own. It is pointed out that if farmers in England co-operated to-day as they should, their societies might buy the best manure, seed, and fodder under the best conditions. They might co-operate to buy and run ploughing, threshing, and other machinery and dairy factories. Co-operative dairies abroad not only pay the farmers a good price for milk, cream, and butter, but are often the source of electricity supply for a village.

England has sent overseas tens of thousands of the farmers she had trained, to build up other lands. She can still be a human reservoir for the British Empire. She can still, with

profit to herself, ship off her surplus population. But is no one to arise to tell her that she cannot afford any longer to send away the finer stock of manhood she needs for her own salvation? The war drained her too heavily—the war whose effects have scarcely yet begun to be felt. The Colonies are the great regenerators of human material. That is their proper purpose and function. The whole history of the human side of the colonization of Australia might be expressed in the words desperation, emigration, recuperation, regeneration. The doctors do not order a sound man to Aix or Homburg. It is only the eugenically, industrially, and economically ailing who should be encouraged to emigrate to the Colonies, and some day—may it not be too late—England will recognize this truth. And it is the same with capital, the migration of which is now becoming a national menace. For capital sent abroad to exploit new industries and employ skilled labour would return a greater and safer profit if directed to undertakings at home. A Canadian surveys the abundant water-powers of Scotland and wonders why the English capitalist finds the inferior ones abroad more attractive. He wonders, as an eminent Anglo-Italian publicist has wondered, at the unwisdom of a people “who might be building new houses for British folk at home, but must follow the capital to Winnipeg.” \*

\* Sir L. Chiozza-Money: *Things that Matter*, 1921.



## V

To be "*autarkos*" (self-supporting) is, says Aristotle, the fundamental principle of a perfect commonwealth. He who was the best farmer in the world has abandoned that principle. And all because he hearkened to false prophets—to those who preached the Spirit of the Age instead of the Spirit of England. He did not develop at home the rural side of his civilization, but allowed it to be developed overseas. The mid-nineteenth century Englishman, because of the success of his manufactures, his foreign commerce, and his colonial expansion, once again in his long history turned from the land. Even now the old, bad gospel is still being preached. There is the voice of Lord Sheffield loudly asking his countrymen :

"Do we wish to increase our home supplies of food at the price of a higher cost to the consumer, of a lower standard of life and comfort to the worker, and at a greater cost of production, when we have the whole world to supply us and more remunerative openings for the employment of those who live by labour ? "

It is good to hear another who has devoted many years to agricultural réform in England urging a contrary policy upon his countrymen in such words as these :

“ I have come to know the face of my own country as few men have been privileged to do. It is out of my love for its well-laboured soil, my hatred for the neglect and waste that deface it, and my faith in the vitality of the people who live by it, that I make my proposals.”

It may yet happen some notable leader of men, some captain of industry, some supreme organizer, will come along and revolutionize English agriculture as several have already revolutionized English soap or biscuit-making or shopkeeping. When that day comes this agricultural Leverhulme or horticultural Selfridge, surveying his elaborated acres and apparatus, his army of happy, well-paid workers with their clubs and leisure, and his handsome dividends, will have triumphantly demonstrated that agriculture in England is profitable, that it was the Spirit of the Age which was at fault and not the Spirit of England.

## CHAPTER XVI

### ENGLAND'S NATIONAL PHYSIQUE

Our men could only draw on such funds of nerve and physique, knowledge and skill, as we had put into the bank for them. Not they, but their rulers and "betters," had lost their heads in the joy of making money fast out of steam, and so made half of our nation slum-dwellers.—C. E. MONTAGU.

**W**HATEVER may be said of the prototype of the Englishman which arose in the eighteenth century, it could not have been taken as representing a Frenchman, a German, or a Scotsman. That John Bull has Henry VIII., Falstaff, and Roger de Coverley as ancestors, and is own brother to Walpole and father of George III. and Samuel Johnson, is acceptable evidence of his representative character.

Yet though John Bull stood generically for the Englishman and for nobody else, yet the number of Englishmen for whom he stood has always been a dubious and fluctuating quantity. If we survey the history of England during the past two centuries and try to assimilate the national figure in its florid sturdiness, steadiness, and sanity to the outward and inward

character of the representative Englishmen who made that history, we begin to have doubts of its felicity. For the two Pitts were confirmed invalids. Wolfe and Nelson were weaklings. Wellington was gaunt and undersized, as was Lord John Russell. Indeed the mental eye ranges the ranks of art and literature, the bench of judges and the bench of bishops, noting rows of bent forms and pallid features, and is only arrested at intervals by the sturdy English figures of a Melbourne or Sydney Smith, a Peel or the third Marquess of Salisbury, and so recover a waning confidence in the prototype.

If it cannot be said with truth that the English were generally beautiful, yet in stature, healthiness, colouring, and expression they could number amongst them some of the finest specimens of the human race.

England's long pre-eminence in sport was a legacy of the national love for open-air life and physical exercise. These engendered a hardy constitution and muscular strength. Horsemanship was particularly agreeable to the Englishman ; but its refinements he only learnt from Continental nations, his prowess in this direction being chiefly shown in boldness and endurance rather than grace and skill. While the upper-class Englishmen were addicted to the chase, the masses were fond of wrestling, single-stick, archery, bowls, and quoits, which were common to every village.

It is a curious fact that competitive athletic games only became a national passion with the rise of industrialism and when the public schools had taken up the cult of cricket and football. From the scholars the cult spread to every village in the land, and the sons of farmers and artisans were invited to measure their strength and skill against the youthful aristocracy. This democratic rivalry involved something more than physical exercise. It stirred into greater activity the old English sense of fair play. A code of morality called sportsmanship sprang into being, implying a strict adherence to rules, a disdain to take an unchivalrous advantage and a cheerful acquiescence in ill-luck and defeat.

Changed habits on the part of the aristocracy, changed fortunes on the part of the middle classes, and increased wages and leisure amongst the masses, favoured the growth of sport. The excitement of chance which figured so prominently in the old popular pastimes, such as dog-fighting and cock-fighting, was continued in horse and dog racing, boxing, and later on in other games, in which gambling amongst the spectators furnished the chief attraction.

In athletics the national passion gradually centred upon cricket, which became the great outstanding English game and has exerted a profound influence on English character in the making.

All competitive athletic sports imply physical fitness, and as the English physique in general was fitter—stronger and more supple—than that of other nations, it naturally followed that England was pre-eminent in hard riding, rowing, running, walking, swimming, and other exercises, and this pre-eminence England long held.

## II

It is idle, however, to pretend that the Great War did not confirm overwhelmingly the theory which writers on eugenics had put forward, that the changed habits and diet of the people, coupled with the sinister prevalence of secret disease, had reacted unfavourably on the physique of the English. The percentages of rejections for the Army were alarming. In spite of the repeated lowerings of the standard of height and chest measurement, the cadres could not be filled with able-bodied recruits, until at last it seemed as if England was degenerating into what the Prime Minister called a "C<sub>3</sub> population." The rejections per centum on a single day in Birmingham reached as high as seventy-three as compared with a maximum of nine for recruits at the French recruiting stations at Lyons or Bordeaux. But far better than a perusal of the evidence given in official reports and in the newspaper articles of the time was a

personal inspection of the English conscripted regiments, not in battle, when their psychological state affected their bearing, but on the march, when they could be reviewed in the mass. The degeneration which had set in from the earlier armies, whether they were compared with the French, the Scotch, or the Irish, was painfully manifest. The superb first hundred thousand had perished, and the Government was now drawing upon the masses—the general average of the nation.

The stature of the Guards had descended from five feet ten inches to five feet eight, then to five feet six inches. One regiment was composed of Englishmen scarce a man of whom stood over five feet. The élite, amounting to perhaps one-hundredth of the available male population, had disappeared, and the nation at large was now under arms in the field.

The process of replenishment was not confined to England. France and Germany were also calling up their uttermost human resources. It was then that the comparison became disquieting. The citizen armies of England, it may be said at once, were inferior in physique to the citizen armies of both those countries. It is true the conditions antecedent to enlistment were not precisely the same. The French and the German youth had been predestined for military service, and a military regimen permeated the

national life and affected its health, habits, and bearing.

On the other hand, the English masses, from whom the conscripts were drawn, had been far better fed and clothed and were less toil-worn than the masses in France and Germany. It is certain that in the field no one could contest the superiority of the Englishman's diet and the arrangements for his welfare. Consequently one might reasonably suppose that being more abundantly fed and better-clad for generations than the populations of other countries, he would be a more splendid animal.

This, however, was only the case with the upper classes and by no means always amongst them; it was clearly not the case with the bulk or ninety per centum of the population.

The lesson of the physical decadence of the English was emphasized by the appearance of the Colonial offshoots of their own stock—the Canadians, the Australians, and, above all, the New Zealanders. Then there were the Americans who, man for man, were taller, straighter, clearer-eyed, and cleaner-limbed, and with better hair and teeth.

Perhaps in this last physical item we have noted a trait which is fuller of portent than all the other evidences of decay. The country is at last waking up to the significance of this matter. Dental statistics in England are appalling. All over the world it would almost



seem that the one certain peculiarity in a new-comer which reveals his English nationality is the state of his teeth. We have been told of a Canadian farmer saying, when the immigrant train passed, "There goes a car-load of English, with six sound teeth to the car-load." The assenting laughter of his auditors demonstrated the justness of the gibe.

Whether the condition of a nation's teeth is a symptom of physical decay or the cause of such decay must be left to the biologists and eugenists to decide. In a paper on the subject, to which he has directed special attention, Captain Elliot, M.P., says :

"The injury to the health of the nation, not merely in actual dental disease, but in the huge number of gastric disorders and the almost unnoticed poisoning from the continual swallowing of minute doses of the products of decaying food, is greater probably than the most pessimistic estimates would declare.

"Nothing," he asserts, "was more striking in the American expeditionary force, as we saw it, than the wonderful set of teeth possessed by every single individual."

### III

The experts are agreed that the English have "the worst teeth in the world." If this fact is evidence of degeneration there is no escaping its conclusions.

But while not denying the fact, other considerations and weightier evidence combat the opinion that the English race is in point of physique permanently degraded from its once high place. There is degeneration—manifest, glaring even, amongst the masses of the population both in town and country; but experience reveals surprising potentialities in the race released from malefic conditions. If there is degeneration there is also a capacity for regeneration. No stock shows such a magical power of recuperating itself. The evil is in England—the diet, the environment, the habits, the vices of modern life—and is not inherent in English bone and marrow.

A dozen years ago a Canadian writer endeavoured to call public attention to interesting phenomena being witnessed in Western Canada—doubtless in all the English Colonies and in America—where immigrants of feeble physique, even what are called “degenerates,” gave birth to children who, under more favourable conditions, developed into individuals strangely unlike and superior to their immediate forbears; while the next generation were actually taller and stronger than the descendants of Latin and Celtic and even Slav and Scandinavian immigrants who had apparently been physically fitter on their arrival in the new milieu.

But what power—what prophet is to awaken the sickly millions in England—to bring about

a moral and hygienic revolution? What sudden and universal flash of insight is to come to the nation, revealing to the industrial masses that their whole organization and practice of daily life is wrong, that they can no longer with impunity herd in cities and take their daily bread from "vans and cans and chemical works," that dirt and disease destroy the body and addiction to cheap pleasures degrade the soul?

That enlightenment which comes to the individual who has reached the age of forty, the secret inward monitor which prompts him to revise his manner of life, to practise self-denial, to abstain from this habit which clogs his mental faculties, from that which congests his arteries or uncomfortably accelerates his secretions, should come also in the process of time to a nation.

The decline in the national physique is reflected in the loss of England's pre-eminence in sport. One by one the honours in all her own games have been wrested from her. Even in the national cricket the youths who come from overseas show themselves in form more stalwart and supple, in nerve steadier, in sight keener; more normal in mental poise than the Englishmen they vanquished.

## CHAPTER XVII

### ENGLAND'S PHILANTHROPY

But dearly must we prize thee ; we who find  
In thee a bulwark for the cause of men.

WORDSWORTH.

There are three logics ; that of the spirit, that of the mind, and that of the heart, the first is Eastern, the second French, and the third English.—GILBERT CANNAN.

There's sap in the old Oak. She lives to sow  
The future forests with her acorns still.  
Hail to thee, Mother of Nations.

GERALD MASSEY.

ENGLAND was the first of the nations to raise the standard of practical humanitarianism. In the English nature is a sentiment of pity for suffering, whether of man or animals, and an intolerance of cruelty which has served as an example to the world. The English were the pioneers of organized charity, and the appeal of a hundred philanthropic societies to the conscience of mankind has resulted in the alleviation of disease, cruelty, and injustice in almost every country under the sun.

Throughout the whole of the nineteenth century it would seem as if England regarded

her rôle in the world as that of universal regenerator and redresser of wrongs. It began with her abolition of negro slavery and the establishment of societies to teach, clothe, and supply medicines to the heathen. At home, the Factory Acts, the Apprentices Act, the Cruelty to Children Act, the Cruelty to Animals Act, and dozens of other legislative measures, were decades in advance of public opinion in other countries. In no other country in the world were there so many hospitals, asylums, and institutions maintained at the public expense. Foreigners marvelled at English sensibility; sometimes they mocked. They could not understand why a carter found beating his horse should be haled off to prison, or why the chaining of a dog to a cart or a filthy kennel should be considered a crime. And many of them cannot yet understand. Here is an element in the English spirit which has certainly helped the world. It is part of that "general instinct to run and help," which the Spanish philosopher has noted. One need not here particularize the multifarious organizations which have had their birth in England for the amelioration of suffering—the thousand and one funds which have sent millions of money, food, and clothing to relieve distress abroad; but to her children overseas it is an inspiration to see the Motherland, which has transmitted so much of her spirit to the World, still engaged in giving—

that in so many directions and in spite of disillusionment, the fount of her altruistic invention is not yet dry.

One may take as typical the immense labours of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, the British and Foreign Bible Society, or the Mission to Seamen, but they would hardly illustrate the modern English spirit of helpfulness as well as three other great English institutions which have now become universal. Two of these exhibit, under the banner of pseudo-military adventure, the peculiar passion of the English for moral reform.

## II

When half a century ago the Rev. William Booth, burning with proselytizing ardour, impatient of the dull ritual of all the churches, clothed his helpers in scarlet tunics, dubbed them "majors" and "captains," hired a brass band and proceeded to create a physical and moral disturbance in all the mean neighbourhoods of the Metropolis, the wondering world was almost too shocked for laughter. It seemed too extreme in its absurdity. And yet extravagance in religion had always been familiar enough. Any device, any method which would produce spiritual *abandon*, had periodically been seized upon by religious zealots. Booth's methods might be grotesque, but they furnished an outlet for the repressed

exuberance of the crowd ; and they succeeded. It is easy to trace the source of his inspiration for the Salvation Army ; surely it was suggested by the joyous robustiousness of the travelling circus with its martial noise, pomp, gold braid, and assumption of consequence ; the thrill it imparts to its simple-minded votaries. One might have a worse model ; there is even an esoteric side to the travelling circus which has allured its tens of thousands.

But behind all this was piety, simplicity—a real desire to make the world better.

As a religious force—in poorer England—the Salvation Army has undeniably achieved a great work, even though the making of converts to Christianity be no longer the chief preoccupation of its managers. Long before Booth's death its energies were more especially directed to "rescue work," to ameliorating the lives of the submerged or outcast members of society, to providing them with food and raiment and temporary shelter, to assisting them to emigrate. In this sphere it has had many imitators and rivals ; but it is doubtful if any of them can approach its perfection of organization. On the religious side it has long since lived down its old reputation for vulgar eccentricity. It has become a familiar and respectable institution. The trombone still blares, the tambourine tintinabulates, and the "Hallelujahs" are ejaculated at the street corner ; but the

pedestrian hardly turns his head. A pert and consequential postman emptying a scarlet pillar-box attracts as much attention. The war—and life in the real army, so necessary for England's national salvation, that and the cosmopolitan wonders of the cinema, have made the costume and regimentation of the Salvation Army seem trivial and trumpery, even to the submergent twentieth in London.

For converts and recruits the "captains" and bonneted "lassies" have by an inspiration turned to the remote villages of the countryside, where life is again dull and the church service even duller than before the war, and here by the honest hard-working labourers, wives, and daughters, and perhaps some chance male loiterers, the brazen melody and rousing choruses are welcomed as a relief from the prevailing tedium and bucolic silences. It is their only substitute, in most parts, for the rebecks and tabors, the glees and roundelays of "Merrie England." The ancient village cross, contemplating the harmonious and frolicking raptures of the little group on the green, mayhap muses tolerantly on the continuity of the life of man and the simplicity of its social manifestations from generation to generation.

### III

A far greater and more enduring idea is the Boy Scouts and its correlative—the Girl

Q



Guides—because it imposes itself exclusively upon the young ; and so can mould and affect mankind in the making. The formation is far better than the redemption of character. The Scout movement, in the language of its English founder, has as its aim

“ the making of citizens with these attributes : character, health, skill, and utility, coupled all the time with happiness. Its object is to give every boy, even, nay especially, the poorest, his chance of success in life. The Scout method of training lies in the out-of-doors, the curriculum of the backwoods, where a lad learns to fend for himself, while realizing the beauties of Nature and the joy of life and health. It gets the boy to develop his efficiency and then to use it for the good of the community as much as for himself.”

The Scout movement is a truly English idea, because it is in the line of succession of all the ideas of English tramps and nature-lovers and open-air vagabonds since Gilbert White of Selborne, George Borrow and John Richard Jefferies ; but it is also true that it could never have been formulated and organized save by an Englishman who had dwelt overseas and revelled in forest fastnesses and wide plains, and learnt savage lore and studied the cunning of beasts and the secrets of Nature. It is all this romantic legend and ritual

(together with the fanciful fabulism for which Mr. Kipling is responsible) that is the "sugar on the pill" of discipline and drudgery which the boy swallows.

And just because it is English—because it embodies the English school code, the English love of open-air athletics, the English spirit of fair-play and self-reliance, the movement has rapidly made its way not only in England, where there are now 250,000 boys in training, but in every part of the world where there is still happily an eagerness to follow the English example in conduct.

One who has seen the Boy Scouts in being in many different parts of the globe—even in the heart of Africa—must recognize in this admirable institution one of the most hopeful gifts that latter-day England—so traduced withal, so disillusioned but always giving, *giving*—has made to the world. Its success is due to its disarming simplicity, to the transparency of its motive, and the fact that it compresses an entire ethical system—the fruit of centuries of moral development—into a serio-comic woodland pastime. The root idea and the paraphernalia would have been natural for such a folk as the Americans to have invented. The application, the spiritual part of it, the organization of it, is as English as cricket, or "Robinson Crusoe," or the perennial English pantomime.

## IV

There is a third peculiarly English institution, antedating both of the foregoing, which has also become universal—the Young Men's Christian Association, founded sixty years ago by Sir George Williams. Here the idea was not so much evangelical, as a social welfare movement for the male juvenile middle classes—chiefly clerks and students, to whom both home life and club life were for the nonce withheld. It offered them a social hall to foregather in, books, lectures, music, and a gymnasium. The religious side never was unduly pressed ; and little by little became so relaxed that one hears of branches of the Y.M.C.A. whose members, confronted on a chance visitation, are perceived, without surprise, to be neither young nor Christian, nor addicted overmuch to association, but grateful for the facilities afforded them for warmth, wisdom, and withdrawal. But, on the whole, the Y.M.C.A.—even in some of its later manifestations during the war, has nobly performed its philanthropic functions, and has beyond question exerted a beneficial effect upon the mental, moral, and physical health of the millions of young men to whom it has, in all lands, at some time or another of their lives, made an appeal. The movement is neither original nor dynamic ; entertainment is still its watchword and vocation ; and lacking

any special proselytizing factor, it is, in spite of its wealth and universality, far inferior in effort or significance not only to the Salvation Army and the Boy Scouts, but to such a body as the Polytechnic Institutes, which carry out the teachings and ideals of William Morris, and which impose a definite task upon the young, affecting not only their morals but the very apparatus of life.

## V

Such institutions as I have named all help to inculcate and foster the English spirit of helpfulness and kindness.

If one were asked for an object lesson in the English spirit as it is manifested at large, none more striking could be furnished than the conduct of the English soldiers in Germany. Here was the great test. An elderly German lady is giving her testimony.

“I remember,” she recalled, “the day when the English Army marched into Cologne, and we were ordered out of our houses into the streets to greet them. They came as our conquerors, so strong and fierce, with their bright helmets and their healthy well-fed faces. I looked around the crowd, and saw not a woman or girl but had a handkerchief in her hand, wiping away the tears. It was a day

of humiliation and resentment for German women.

"Soon we began to mark the conduct of the English soldiers, and especially of the English officers, and we could not believe at first it was natural. We said among ourselves it was only a pose.

"I saw an English officer of high rank rise from his seat in a tramway-car and help a burdened old woman up the steps into his vacant seat. I saw him dispose of her bundle—such attentions as no German officer would bestow upon any woman—and I went home to marvel. As time went on we women found it was the ordinary behaviour of your officers.

"I have seen an English officer leading his little child by the hand through the public street, while German women turned and looked with wide-open eyes. And now we women find our own men are so much the better for the example ; they are learning to be gentlemen like the English."

An American visitor in Cologne remarks upon not only the change of manners which has come over the German men in the occupied area, but in the whole spirit and outlook of society. He notes a more suave and generous mood in the newspapers, in the plays presented at the theatre, in the conduct of the crowd in the street. The old intolerance and irritability are gone—the people have become patient,

good-humoured, and easy-going. Just like the English in Birmingham or Nottingham. Another observer testifies :

“ The prestige of our army of occupation has penetrated far beyond the occupied area. Even the military caste is showing signs of throwing off the overbearing manners which the Prussian system had imposed upon them, and which the English officer abandoned two centuries ago.

“ I visited a city where I renewed an old acquaintance of ten years ago, in the person of the nephew of my host. In those days he had just donned the uniform of a sub-lieutenant of Uhlans, and it was his pleasant custom, when I entered a room where he chanced to be, to swagger out with much clanking of accoutrements. He could not endure to breathe the same atmosphere as the *Verpflichtete Engländer*.

“ I found him now looking a generation older, and anxious to smoke a quiet cigar with me. ‘ I used to be very rude to you once,’ he said quietly, when we were alone. ‘ I know better now.’ ”

## CHAPTER XVIII

### ENGLAND'S ORDEAL BY BATTLE

So it would go on, week after week, sitting after sitting of the dismal court that liquidated in the Flanders mud our ruling classes' wasted decades, until we either lost the war outright or were saved from utter disaster by clutching at aid from French brains and American numbers.—C. E. MONTAGU : *Disenchantment*.

Not being myself an Englishman I sometimes marvel at the modesty of the English, at their patience, at their self-control, at their cool imperturbability, at their fairness, at their capacity for "playing the game" in every crisis and in every catastrophe ! They are the most wonderful race the world has ever seen. I know they have their defects, but in this war their virtues have shone and burned with a hard gem-like flame. The Romans at their best were never quite as Roman as the English.—JAMES DOUGLAS.

**I**N the first chapter of this little book I indicated the factors which have, during the past quarter of a century, contributed to the occultation of England and English prestige. Let us now examine the marked acceleration of the process since August 1914—to the part played by England in the World War—always regarding England as a simple unit in the Britannic Commonwealth, albeit with five times the population and many times the wealth of the largest amongst them.

What English historian has yet dared to

lay bare the tragedy of England during the Great War, from the moment of the first political crisis to her humiliating ordeal by battle, past her relinquishment of the supreme direction in the field to the frustration of her hopes of peace and her present acquiescence in the destiny being arranged for her whose will was once supreme in the councils of the world ?

In hardly any respect does twentieth-century England evince so marked a contrast to the England of the nineteenth as in the want amongst the people generally of a sense of responsibility. With the breakdown of class distinctions each group tries to shift the burden of maintaining the honour and credit of the nation upon some other group. Such a tendency leads inevitably to leaderlessness. For in the past the task of pointing out to the body of Englishmen where England's honour and credit lay rested with the select and trusted few. But Englishmen may now feel themselves betrayed : they do not know whom to trust— which Welshman, Scotchman, Irishman, or Jew they may follow, confident that the welfare and fair name of England is safe in his hands.

The need of England, in order that she should have availed herself of the power which her numbers alone gave her, was, first of all, national unity, which she did not possess, and, secondly, a great English leader. The history which had been in the making for ten years



before the outbreak of war—since the departure of Joseph Chamberlain—had disintegrated English statesmanship and expelled most of the English statesmen. Never before was a great nation—if, indeed, England was still a nation and not already merged in the British Empire—so leaderless. In that fateful hour the English people solemnly took stock of their resources in camp and council chamber; they saw few names to inspire that confidence which their ancestors had felt in those masterful spirits who, in other ages and crises, had prevailed over the nation's enemies. A Liberal government ruled England, but in that government of intellectuals, doctrinaires, and reformers were outstanding few members of the traditional ruling class of England. One by one they had vanished, and were replaced by the Scots, the Welsh, and the Irish.

True, the Secretary of State for War was an Englishman. He was still young, ardent, active, cheery, and with a strong tinge of idealism. But could anybody be five minutes in the company of this blue-eyed, pleasant gentleman and listen to his innocent platitudes, recalling the simplicity of an English school-boy, and be deluded into the belief that here was a master of either statecraft or strategy?

Where, indeed, in all England was such a master to be found? Instinctively the nation's gaze became focussed on the figure of Lord Kitchener. Then it was that the national

propensity of England to idealism, its worship of success, its devotion to symbols, its seduction by appearances, its constitutional shrinking from piercing behind pretence to reality, all these traits combined to force an elderly, simple-minded, rather prosaic engineer officer into the rôle of national saviour. By the applause, and partly by the moral poverty, but in a far greater measure by the honest simplicity of his countrymen, Kitchener was elevated upon a pedestal of human greatness which would have tried the nerve of Cromwell or Wellington. His it destroyed.

## II

A great deal has been said and written of late about Lord Kitchener. But the English are too generous to traduce his memory. Yet we overseas can envisage the truth. With us, at least, there is a consideration greater than Kitchener—it is England.

Lord Kitchener failed, and with his failure the spirit of England which would have wrought so much was gagged and fettered, and in so far he did England an irreparable wrong. His failure was his fatal paralysis in the face of a great opportunity to unite England in arms, to accept instantly and in the golden moment the tribute England was ready to pay him and organize the whole nation for victory. In 1914 it could have been done by a word,

and the word was not spoken. The most Kitchener could do was to issue a call for volunteers. *Volunteers!* How could a man who knew the masses of England ever so little suppose that these sluggish millions, good-tempered and easy-going in the main, confident of themselves, careless of foreigners, long habituated to peace and regarding war as the business of the military caste, and the defence of their homes and property the function of the police—how could he imagine that these, faced with a monster and imminent peril, could safely be left to think out the problem of defence—of “man-power”—for themselves, what classes should serve and for how long, what age limit was desirable, whether those who entertained conscientious objections to war in the abstract should or should not be exempted, and so on—when all the situation required and the nation needed, was from him a single word of command—“*To arms!*” And nothing is more certain than if that word had been uttered in October 1914—after the First Battle of Ypres—the whole nation would have concurred in conscription—have sprung to arms; that young and old, rich and poor, would have come forward with alacrity to serve the State. As it was, one Englishman who might have saved England all her later schism and searchings of soul, her years of partial and ineffectual efforts, hundreds of thousands of lives and thousands of millions

of money, threw away his chance and preferred to entreat and cajole the English masses, who grumblingly acquiesced in their plain duty at last, when it had been attractively put before them on the hoardings and when hints were obligingly dropped upon them by the enemy Zeppelins.

A little incident related by Lord Derby reveals the pathos of Lord Kitchener in the very crisis of the war :

“ I saw him in his room at the War Office, and he said to me, ‘ I wish you could tell me what I am doing wrong.’ When I expressed my surprise, he said, ‘ I feel there is something I ought to be doing. There is something more I ought to do for the country. I am doing all I can, and yet I feel I am leaving much undone.’ ”

The fact that Englishmen eventually acquitted themselves in accordance with their traditions only contributes further to the tragedy ; it does nothing to extenuate the fatal misreading of their character.

Sixty years ago Lord Palmerston said :

“ It has been the fashion among the people of the Continent to say that the English nation is not a military nation. In one sense, indeed—in their sense—the assertion may be said to be true. But no nation can excel the English, either as officers or soldiers, in a knowledge of the duties of the military profession, and

in the zeal and ability with which those duties are performed ; and wherever desperate deeds are to be accomplished, wherever superior numbers are to be boldly encountered and triumphantly overcome, wherever privations are to be encountered, wherever that which a soldier has to confront is individually or collectively to be faced, there, I will venture to say, there is no nation on the face of the globe which can surpass—I might without too much national vanity say, I believe there is no nation which can equal—our people.”

Alas, for the precious time and precious lives which had been wasted ! It was then that the seeds were sown of a grim harvest not yet reaped.

### III

In the field of 1914 Sir John French—an Englishman—was given the command of a force preponderantly English, but which no one but a foreigner would have dared to call the English Army. Sir John French was, in the opinion of many to-day, the most capable commander that the war produced on our side.

It is ludicrous now to recall the resources upon which the English nation—nay, the whole British Empire—relied for victory. What credulity is reflected in the English newspapers of 1914-15, when the nation lulled itself with

the illusion that it was keeping the enemy in check, at a time when a few tired divisions manned a few score miles of the Allied front !

French's dispositions of his small force on the Marne will be held by historians to have been a vital contribution to the result, and his masterly movement to the north showed an almost Napoleonic genius ; but the action of those early days which showed most courage and initiative, and whose failure seemed so condign, was Mr. Winston Churchill's plan to relieve Antwerp.

One other daring and brilliant conception was to enlist Mr. Churchill's energy, and with the breakdown of the Gallipoli adventure, which ought to have succeeded, and would have succeeded if the control lay with him, Mr. Churchill retired to a long semi-obscurity. Sir John French, too, was superseded, and the War Office, on December 23, 1915, issued this announcement :

“ General Sir Douglas Haig, having assumed the supreme command of the British Forces in France and Flanders, General Sir Charles Monro will succeed him in command of the First Army. Lieutenant-General Sir Archibald Murray, Chief of the Imperial General Staff, will succeed Sir Charles Monro. Lieutenant-General Sir William Robertson, now Chief of the General Staff in France, will become Chief of the Imperial General Staff with the

temporary rank of General, and with Major-General R. Whigham as his deputy.

"Major-General L. Kiggell, now Assistant to the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, will become Chief of the General Staff to Sir Douglas Haig."

*All of the foregoing thus gazetted were Scotchmen, save the last-named, who was Irish.*

Previously, on the lamentable failure of the Gallipoli expedition, under that gallant Scotchman, Sir Ian Hamilton, who was now "retired," General Monro, another Scotchman, was sent out to take the supreme command, then transferred to Salonika, *vice* General Mahon, and afterwards succeeded a Scotchman, Sir Beauchamp Duff, who had himself succeeded an Irishman, Sir O'Moore Creagh, as Commander-in-Chief of India. Another Scotchman, Mr. Tennant, held the office of Under-Secretary of State for War, while Dr. Macnamara, a Canadian-born Irishman, was Parliamentary Secretary at the Admiralty.

A highly important department was that of Military Intelligence at the War Office, the department, by the way, responsible for the reports of what Englishmen were doing in the field. This was entrusted to an Irish Roman Catholic, Sir G. M. McDonogh.

Again, on February 22, under the heading "Army Changes," one read :

"The Secretary of the War Office makes the following announcement :—

"Lieutenant - General Sir H. Sclater, K.C.B., has been appointed to be General Officer Commanding-in-Chief the Southern Command, in succession to Lieutenant-General Sir W. P. Campbell, K.C.B. [Scotch], who is taking over the command at Chester from General Sir H. Mackinnon [Scotch], now Director of Recruiting at the War Office.

"Lieutenant-General Sir Nevil Macready, K.C.B., K.C.M.G. [Scotch], succeeds Sir H. Sclater as Adjutant-General to the Forces."

General Smith-Dorrien [English] was sent off to East Africa, shortly to be superseded, "on account of ill-health," by General Smuts [Dutch].

#### IV

Sir Douglas Haig was one of that increasing class of Scotsmen who, by contact and communion, have absorbed the English spirit. Any native ruggedness or asperity the new commander might have retained from his ancestors had been obliterated in the course of a schooling in Gloucestershire, a term at Oxford, and association with the young bloods of the 10th Hussars. Haig was the essence of urbanity, humane and dignified, with a certain agreeable flavour of personal

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vanity, an excellent specimen of the derived Englishman.

There were some who thought it an irony of fate that at a time when the result of each campaign—of every day's fighting—made it increasingly evident that what the armed hosts of the British Empire wanted was a master of dispositions, a searching capacity to think in vectors ; a relentless vigour and a definite and inexorable purpose to slay, macerate, and obliterate the enemy by the quickest and most deadly methods, the gentle, agreeable figure of Haig entered upon the scene as the saviour of the Britannic Commonwealth.

Was it wholly unreasonable that there were murmurings among the younger spirits, and that they permitted their vain regrets a licence which only a harsh critic could now revert to and rebuke ?

Seated in a cellar at Ypres one far-travelled soldier-poet, urged by an impulse born of impatience and impotence, penned an invocation which expressed the feelings of so many of his fellows, and for that reason is now not insignificant.

The final stanzas ran :

They tell us that the War demands  
That we should watch and wait,  
That burning hearts and eager hands  
Should leave their charge to Fate.  
'Tis false ! we grope beneath the ban  
Because Thou hast not sent the Man.

In England hast Thou not in truth,  
 A warrior of an iron will ?  
 Of lofty soul, with faith and youth,  
 Of Wolfe's or Nelson's battle skill ?  
 Then lead him forth that he may lead,  
 And prove us of Thine ancient breed ! \*

Where, indeed, amongst that race which had for so long directed the destinies of so many tens of millions was the Cromwell, the Marlborough, the Clive, the Wolfe, the Wellington, who was to vivify the army, revolutionize its tactics, terminate the deadlock of trench warfare, and bring about a speedy victory ?

There is one student of war who believes that the man was there, even in the English ranks, as he was certainly in those of the French. But even Napoleon had to wait until the clash of internal passions had subsided, until the human material he had to work with was fit to be moulded.

England grew docile enough. Her head was bowed with sorrow. She was for the first time in her long history responsive to direction. The old elements of fire died out within her, and she bent her bleeding head with a humility that astonished the world and distressed her friends who called aloud upon her to repudiate the slanders upon her. Her best men—her most valiant youth—were dead ; other and vaster forces were pressing forward ;

\* *Pall Mall Gazette*, June 9, 1916.

she carried the burden of all her Allies around her neck, and the billions of money she had accumulated were being wasted like water.

Yet how little boasting there was may be seen from a reference to the English press and the Army *communiqués* during that period of the war when every power in the Entente was showing signs of weakening save England, at that crucial time when it was England and not France which was bearing the heaviest burden of the war. It was "Great Victory of Scottish Troops," "Canadians Win a Great Battle," "Gallant Charge by Welshmen," "Australia's Magnificent Effort."

The definite policy of the War Office would appear to have been, to blot out the name of England in every official document and announcement and, while encouraging to the full the local pride of Scotland, Ireland, and Wales, to depreciate England in every possible way.

An official of the Canadian Pacific Railway, Mr. E. C. Gill, wrote to the press, sounding a note of warning :

"Throughout the Empire and the world at large," he stated, "the holding up and the suppression of information with regard to England is having a sinister effect. It is not realized, for instance, that in proportion to her population England has sent more men to

the colours and suffered more grievous losses than any other part of the Empire. Why? Because of the Censorship. English men and women throughout our vast and far-flung Empire, who subscribe in thousands to the Old Country papers, look and look in vain for any accounts of English bravery, or English heroism, or English victories on land or sea, or in the air, and if they reside in alien lands is it any wonder they are depressed when asked, 'What are the *English* doing?' "

An English peer, Lord Selborne, protested in public at the way England was being treated.

"They read," he said, "every day of the doings of Scottish, Irish, and Dominion regiments. All the praise given to them was due; but for some reason, which he did not understand, the correspondents found it much more difficult to mention the name of any *English* regiment, and yet there were no regiments who had done more magnificent service than the old English county regiments.

"The record of the Middlesex Regiment was a record of continuous glory. The men of his own county (Hampshire) went into action on July 1 with twenty-four officers, and not one came out. The second battalion was part of that immortal 29th Division.

"The newspapers constantly reminded people of what the Anzacs did there, but they

should never allow the Anzacs to be mentioned without coupling with them the 29th Division."

What wonder that resentment filled the breast of certain Americans at England's "perfidious" shirking of the brunt of battle—England, who at that moment was doing four-fifths of the British fighting on land and sea, was policing the seas, transporting nine-tenths of the sea-borne supplies to the Allied Armies, and was even engaged in bribing France and Italy not to throw up the sponge in view of the victory she alone believed in!

What wonder there were a Spartan mother's tears in the eyes of the Englishwoman, who from a balcony in the Place Vendôme watched the fickle Parisian crowd raise again the ancient cry, "A bas les Anglais!" What solace to her could be found in the counter-shouts of "Vivent les Canadiens!" or "Vivent les Australiens!"? What mockery was Empire to her when England's pride was wounded to the quick and England was yet silent?

Eventually, the spell was broken, not by the British War Office. A belated translation of the Orders of the Day of the Fifth French Army issued on August 20, 1916, recited the glorious deeds of two English regiments—the 2nd Battalion of the Devons and the 1/4th Battalion King's Shropshire Light Infantry. In simple but deeply moving words this French army order told how, on May 27, the whole battalion of the Devons "offered

their lives in ungrudging sacrifice to the sacred cause of the Allies," and how, on June 6, the Shropshires with magnificent dash saved a critical situation by recapturing a key position which had been lost.

"It is well," spoke one commentator, "that these heroic deeds by English regiments should be proclaimed to the world, for ever since the war began there has been a tendency, both at the War Office and in the English press, to give credit to every one except to Englishmen. In normal times this is an attitude of which no complaint need be made, at any rate by Englishmen; but in the present condition of world politics it has had the unfortunate result of giving a basis to the enemy lie that England as the predominant partner is making the junior partners do all the fighting. That England is fully conscious of and immensely grateful for this magnificent service of Scotsmen and Welshmen, Canadians, Australians, New Zealanders, and South Africans and Indians, goes without saying; but if the figures be examined it will be found that England alone has sent to the battle-front probably three times as many men as all the rest of the Empire put together."

It was comforting to Colonials no less than to Englishmen, too, when Mr. Maxse took up the cause of the English fighting men in the *National Review*.

“ There is serious risk lest we forget that the word British comprises, *inter alia*, the inhabitants of England, who have been no negligible factors during these three fateful years, though the Powers that be are oblivious of the fact. Indeed, there is almost a conspiracy of silence against the English, who, so far as *communiqués* go, might almost be neutral. Every success, great or small, is attributed to one or other ‘ Colonial ’ force, unless some noted Irish or Scottish regiment should be so fortunate as to ‘ catch the Speaker’s eye.’ There may be only one Colonial unit to nine English units engaged in the same operation, the results of which are presumably due to corporate effort, so it is not exactly exhilarating for the nine English to learn next day from their newspapers that success was exclusively due to the unaided efforts of the one Colonial. Nor is the Colonial, who is usually as keen a sportsman as he is a fighter, overpleased, because he knows it is not true and does not wish to rob his comrades of their due, although his relations overseas may be momentarily elated at his winning the war. But what of the relations of the English? Are they utterly unworthy of consideration? We can all understand how this eagerness to efface ourselves and to honour the Colonials originally arose—they had come so far, many of them are magnificent men, and it is their appearance on European battlefields.

"It was ever the same throughout British history; but as the Englishman has never acquired the art of *se faire valoir*, it has come as a fresh revelation to the present generation. All competent foreign staff officers, while unstinted in praise of our rank and file, are especially struck by the amazing standard of tenacity throughout many units drawn largely from the middle and south of England—men who are very slow to anger, easy-going, good-natured, cheerful, enduring, domestic, lovable, to whom fear is a total stranger, and who, never knowing when they are beaten, never can be beaten. Although they are unknown to the world—and perhaps all the greater on that account—we at the back respectfully salute the 'unboomed' Englishman."

Several of the war correspondents now and then broke away from their leading strings to pay a tribute to the English regiments. One of them, Mr. (now Sir William) Beach-Thomas, wrote :

"The parts of the Empire that are not English have contributed to the common stock, zeal and talent and devotion that have woven the stuff of victory. No one who thinks Imperially desires distinction; but we may recognize that the readiness of the English to acknowledge and, indeed, proclaim the virtues of all the rest has been the master



cause of the welding of all this varied army into a united force, moving with one will and intention. Home is home and is called home, because of a sort of magnanimous modesty in the English people. And that is why the refrain of the Hymn of Hate is—England.”

Then there was the discovery of the Englishmen forced to serve in Highland and Irish regiments. A famous Irish hero, Lieut. O’Leary, V.C., who was not likely to be biased against his own country in this matter, told a recruiting meeting that in his battalion of the Connaught Rangers there were 900 Englishmen—in other words, three-quarters of the strength. Yet no doubt the Rangers at the beginning of the war were entirely Irish, but with insufficient recruiting the drafts have had to be filled up with Englishmen. Facts of this kind made little difference to the Nationalist politicians. As long as the Irish regiments were called “Irish,” even if not a single Irishman were left in them, England was still assured that Ireland was saving England.

Again and again English commanders during the war testified that in spite of the publicity given to Scottish, Irish, Welsh, and Colonial troops, it was upon the English, not merely that the brunt of the fighting fell, but upon whom they could best depend.

“I have often,” declared Lord Rawlinson,

"had the choice as to the disposition of troops on the field of battle; but when there has been a point that it was really important to hold, when there has been a tactical area of great importance which we could not afford to lose, it has always been the English troops that I have chosen. I do not wish," he continued, "in any way to minimize the great effort and the marvellous successes that have been won by the Dominion troops. I do not minimize what Scotland, Wales, and Ireland have done; but I do say this, and, mind you, I know, that of the troops I have had under my command, the Englishman has done best."

But then—Lord Rawlinson was an Englishman!

## V

In politics the ebullition and insurgence of the newer forces in the British islands had subsided, and out of the political storm had emerged a saviour in the person of Mr. Lloyd George.

Then the new era long-desired began,  
And in its need the hour had found the man!

The man had come. It is, perhaps, not strange that the dynamic power, the shrewdness, the mental suppleness of which the British Empire stood so sorely in need at this crisis should not have been found amongst

Englishmen. Besides the two leaders, the one Welsh and the other Scotch, there was General Jan Smuts, a Dutch Boer, Mr. W. M. Hughes, a Welshman, Lord Beaverbrook, a Scottish Canadian, Sir Edward Carson, an Irishman, Lord Pirrie, a Scotsman, Sir Alfred Mond, a German Jew, Sir Harry Wilson, an Irishman, and Lord Reading and Mr. E. S. Montagu, who were Jews. These men were the "live wires" of the new régime.

One instinctively thinks of Napoleon Bonaparte and his parvenu-marshals—and the shadowy, invertebrate figures of the poor, proud Bourbons receding further and further into the background of the picture. Where, then, was the ancient blood and chivalry of France—and where now was England's? Contrast these flesh-and-blood "organizers of victory" with the listless Lansdownes and supercilious Curzons and evasive Asquiths, the aloof Morley, the hundreds of well-meaning, ineffectual English aristocrats and the millions of puzzled but earnest, leaderless Englishmen, and you may think that a cruel destiny had demanded something from the race in its hour of ordeal which it was not now in its power to supply. It still had loyalty and steadfastness and enduring power; but the crisis demanded ferocity, mendacity, chicanery, to meet Ludendorff's war policy of annihilation, and these weapons were not in the armoury of the English race. War passions

had to be sedulously fostered. The honest English squire had to be taught to overcome his foolish antipathy to the use of poison. He had to be slowly drilled into the arts of deception and subterfuge. The too squeamish private soldier of the only nation which (to quote the late Mr. Page) "had the guts," had to be taught the virtue of the umbilical manipulation of the saw bayonet.

History may say what it likes of those crucial days, but this much at least is clear: every lesson, every precept, every norm, every instinct of virtue and chivalry and decency that England had acquired as the result of its civilization was being daily outraged. Nevertheless, O singular paradox! was the authentic voice of England more to be found in the rousing and uncompromising utterances of Mr. Lloyd George, General Smuts, Mr. Hughes, and the rest of the Welsh, Scots, and Dutch saviours of the Empire than in the weak and deprecating jeremiads of Lord Lansdowne and his friends.

The reason for this is not inscrutable; it has already been indicated in these chapters. It was the Spirit of England which was the protagonist which Germany had to face—the spirit which had entered into the outstanding leader of the English, who, lacking it, in spite of his eloquence and shrewdness, would have been as powerless as his even shrewder predecessor, Benjamin Disraeli, had he not

had behind him the steady, sturdy, patient, tolerant body of the English nation.

Sir Gilbert Parker tells a story of having met a distinguished man in Waterloo Place in 1916. He asked him, "How do you think things are going?" The response was, "Why did we not make terms with the Germans when we could get them?" Is it realized how many "distinguished men" were going about despairing of their country at that time? Sir Gilbert continues :

"I said, 'Have you mentioned that to others?' He said, 'Yes.' I said, 'Well, it does not affect me, and it does not affect men who are intelligent; but what you say will be repeated, going down and down to the masses of Englishmen, and these may say, "This distinguished man says we ought to make terms with the Germans." That was the danger!'" For the Englishman reposes a hereditary trust in his social superiors, and it is shameful when they betray him by their un-English fears. But it was ever thus—and these are the same men "who used to panic after every Crusade and every visitation of the Plague."

## VI

In the field the war went on in its uninspired way, punctuated by strategical blunders from which the British Army only saved itself

from disaster in the nick of time. Once, as at Cambrai, an English general, by a display of initiative and vigour, almost snatched a decisive victory which might have altered the whole character of the war. But he needed to be seconded with promptitude and overwhelming force to snatch the fruits of his victory. He was not so seconded and the fruits were lost. In the Near East another—perhaps the only other outstanding English general—secured a signal triumph over the enemy; but high and representative as is Lord Allenby's character, he himself, with generosity and perhaps with truth, attributed his Syrian successes to his Chief of Staff, one of the most brilliant soldiers in the British Army, the Belgian, Sir Louis Jean Bols.

The end came at last. But long before the end the direction of the British Army had passed more than ever out of English hands, and in the final clash of arms we hear less and less of English commanders and English fighting units. More and more it is the Imperial which overlay the purely national character, and a deep symbolism lurks in the fact that the final shot in the war was not fired by an Englishman, and that Mons, lost by English troops at the beginning of the war, was finally occupied by Canadians under a general of Scottish descent.

“So we had failed—had won the fight and

lost the prize; the garland of the war withered before it was gained. The lost year, the broken youth, the dead friends, the women's overshadowed lives at home, the agony and bloody sweat—all had gone to darken the stains which most of us had thought to scour out of the world that our children would live in.”\*

Nowhere do the weaknesses and vices of the usurping janissaries appear so enormous as in the prodigality with which the national substance was squandered on the civil business and apparatus of the army. For this reckless and unnecessary profusion unparalleled resources in money and credit were necessary; England possessed both, and all were spent. Were the two billions Great Britain borrowed from America quintupled, it would not necessarily be an indictment of her prodigality. If outlay is a necessity, no sacrifice can be accounted too great. It is only when one has some familiarity with the incidence of expenditure during the war that one is shocked, as the frugal French commissariat was shocked, at a scale of expense in every department so high, so wanton, so fantastic, that it seems as if the country must have been either panic-stricken or utterly reckless to have tolerated it a single week.

I heard a famous financier say in 1917

• C. E. Montagu : *Disenchantment*.

that Great Britain could have fought the war and done all that it was humanly possible to do on a million pounds a day if her rulers had liked. Germany had been forced to do it. It soon came to a daily expenditure of £5,000,000. But by that time Great Britain was financing all her Allies, pouring out money like water, in the belief that money could do the work of brains and skill and hard labour.

Wars—great wars—have been won by great nations in deadly earnest with empty exchequers. Charles XII., Frederick the Great, Washington, Napoleon, Lee, led victorious armies scantily clad and frugally fed, but burning with ardour and devotion. What would Wellington's commissary-general have said to the tons of beef and mutton, of jam and biscuits, daily wasted by Haig's highly paid troops on the Western Front alone? Troops in the field should fare well to keep them in health and spirits; but it was Cæsar's and Napoleon's rule that booty and bounty should come from the enemy, and not be the expense of the coffers of their own impoverished fatherland.

## VII

And it is England which must expect to bear, for a century at least, the burden. It is nothing to the purpose that America's prodigality—when she finally came in—went far



further; and one of the traditions which will linger longest in France and Italy is that of the huge camps of pampered private soldiers, each drawing six shillings a day, gorging themselves on a thousand luxuries unknown to them in times of peace, officered by youths whose pay seasoned French generals would not scorn, while a league away the unpaid battalions of a more Spartan republic, unmurmuring at their hardy fare, moved grimly and shabbily onward to the slopes and valleys of Verdun.

Is it true that England's later armies had to be gorged and pampered in order to make them fight? If so, it seems to point to a general weakening of the national resolution and will to conquer—to a complete failure of the masses to understand the mighty issue which was at stake. This would account for the persistence of the appeals of England's public men, the iteration of the old arguments, the emphasis on the original provocation, which made many, not knowing who were in truth the defaulters, despair of England's unity and immutability of purpose.

No one expects that antique spirit nowadays which made so many of the English volunteers of 1914 actually return their pay (as there are still Quixotic members of Parliament who refuse theirs), and no one can rightly question the splendid generosity with which the wounded and disabled and bereaved were

treated; but did the British Government ponder, in its proud munificence, on the inevitable day of reckoning, so humiliating to the victors?

It would be as painful as purposeless to enumerate Great Britain's costly follies—the monstrous and futile schemes, the adventures and the daily prevalent waste—continued long after the war. They illustrate a vice in the national character which foreign nations neither understand nor easily forgive. It was all done, as in moments of stress all things in England are done, carelessly, cheerfully, large-heartedly, because it did not consort with England's honour and with her reputation for opulence to be niggardly.

But for all that, although the war was won, the cost must be paid. One cannot dissociate generosity from sacrifice, and the English people, upon whom seven-eighths of the burden fell, are confronted now by the full extent of British war-time commitments. Germany made none. She fought the whole world for four years on her own resources, and never borrowed a dollar.

We in the English-speaking dominions know what Great Britain has won in the war. But what has England lost? How is she to recover the hegemony, the trust, the admiration of the world which her leaders forfeited for her?

## CHAPTER XIX

### ENGLAND'S DESTINY

Time may change, and the skies grow strange with signs of treason  
and fraud and fear :  
Foes in union of strange communion may rise against thee from  
far and near ;  
Sloth and greed on thy strength may feed, as cankers waxing from  
year to year.

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE : *England*.

We who have learned how in the darkest hour  
The greatest light breaks out, and in the time  
Of trial she reveals her noblest strength ;  
We cannot fear for England ; cannot fear,  
We who have felt her big heart beat in ours.

MASSEY.

**I**N seeking to illustrate the relation of the size of a State to the powers of its citizens, Aristotle likened it to a ship which, said he, must not be too large to be worked by the muscles of the crew.

“ Fifty years ago,” comments Mr. Wallas, “ the statesmen who were reconstructing Europe on the basis of nationality thought that they had found the relevant facts in the causes which limit the physical and mental homogeneity of nations. A State, they thought, if it is to be effectively governed, must be a

homogeneous "nation," because no citizen can imagine his State or make it the object of his political affection unless he believes in the existence of a national type to which the individual inhabitants of the State are assimilated." \*

"Government," once declared Lord Rosebery, "is really but a small matter compared with national character, and it is the respect for and the assertion of national character, that constitutes patriotism."

And again :

"I believe it to be better that, where the national type is of a self-sufficing character, nations should not blend."

Bismarck deliberately limited the area of his intended German Empire by a quantitative calculation as to the possibility of assimilating other Germans to the Prussian type. He always opposed the inclusion of Austria, and for a long time the inclusion of Bavaria, on the ground that while the Prussian type was strong enough to assimilate the Saxons and Hanoverians to itself, it would fail to assimilate Austrians and Bavarians.

Unless the signs in the heavens fail, England, as a nation, in the days to come, must follow one of two courses. She will either be forced to yield all pretence to racial unity,

\* *Our Social Heritage*, 1921.

merging her individuality in the British character, or else, by a mighty effort of national self-consciousness, shake herself free of the mocking incubus of Empire, regain her independence, and re-possess her English soul.

A movement for securing Home Rule for England has for some time been under serious consideration.

"The question of Home Rule," wrote the late Lord Brassey, "has been considered far too long and too exclusively from the Irish or, to a lesser extent, from the Scotch or Welsh point of view. It is high time that we Englishmen made up our minds to secure that the management of our English affairs should be in the hands of Englishmen."

It seems strange that measures should be imposed on England, as in the Parliament of 1906, by Scotchmen and Irishmen against the wishes of the majority of the English representatives. Again, why, asked Lord Brassey, should the question of the disestablishment of the Church of England be decided by the votes of Scotch Presbyterians?

Devolution has now become far more necessary than it was when in 1918 a deputation waited on the Prime Minister to urge the appointment of a Devolution Commission.

"In the opinion of many persons," writes Lord Selborne, "the time has passed when

it is humanly possible for one Parliament to give all the attention necessary to the affairs of the United Kingdom, and of the Empire, and to our foreign relations, and also to legislate properly for the domestic business of England and Scotland and of Wales. But, if this assumption is admitted, it follows inevitably that England, Scotland, and Wales must each be provided with a Government and Legislature concerned exclusively with what are exclusively English, Scottish, or Welsh affairs. This multiplication of Governments and of Legislatures appears very alarming to some people, but it is nothing more nor less than the application of the federal principle of government which is working so successfully in the much smaller (as judged by population) Dominions of Canada, and Australia, and South Africa.

“Not only would such a measure of devolution set the Imperial Parliament free to do the work of the United Kingdom and of the Empire in a way in which it has not done it for many years, but it would give the English people freedom to deal with purely English affairs in a purely English way, and it would relieve them from the growing and well-intentioned, but nevertheless ill-informed, influence of Scottish and of Welsh Members of Parliament in purely English domestic legislation.”

As to England's wealth from trade and

commerce, those national interests may be served perhaps best by her devotion to her own domestic concerns.

“ Anything which will leaven the toiling mass of humanity, quicken the pulse and the intelligence, bring hope to the children of the hopeless, or stimulate productive industry, will do more to prolong England’s hold upon the trade of the world than a hundred Imperial conferences. To devise means to keep her money and her men *at home*, and to give each an equal chance, is now the problem which lies on the doorstep of the home citadel of this fecund mother of nations, who still abounds in incredible resources, strength, and power, notwithstanding the demands already made upon her and to which she has responded with a lust for adventure without parallel.” \*

When I reflect on the events which are now happening in England—the homeless to be properly housed, the economic fallacies to be exposed, the inventions to be exploited, the opportunities for brain and muscle wherever one turns, it seems incredible that there should be living one listless Englishman. If England is ever to stand sane, sinewy, and serene, isolated at last from her aggressors, justifying her new freedom, now is the time, and every man with English blood in his veins should

\* J. D. Whelpley: *The Trade of the World*.

turn joyfully to the task. As Mr. Kipling says:

"The weight, the range, and the evenly-spread richness of our national past should balance us sufficiently to navigate through whatever storms there may be ahead."

We know overseas that England is "crippled by the loss and wastage of a whole generation, and that her position from the civil point of view to-day is the position of our armies in the darkest days of the war." The wheel of history has again come full circle, and the weight once more lies where it lay in the time of our forefathers. Mr. Kipling lately told his fellow-countrymen in prose what he had told them so often for thirty years in verse, that the

"sole force under God's good providence that can meet this turn of our fate is not temperament, not opportunism, nor any effort to do better than good, but character and again character—such mere ingrained common sense, hand-hammered loyal strength of character as one humbly dares to hope that fifteen hundred years of experience have given us.

"If this hope is true—and because we know the breed in our hearts we know that it is true—if this hope be justified our children's children, looking back through the luminous years to where we here stumble and falter, will



say to themselves: ' Was it possible—was it possible that the English of that age did not know, could not see, dared not even guess, to what height of strength, wisdom, and enduring honour they had lifted their land? ' " \*

Other acute and well-informed observers are also not without confidence in the ability of England to extricate herself from the present seething discontent and the predicament into which she has been plunged by British statesmen. At the conclusion of a thoughtful book Sir Philip Gibbs says, that although he sees the gravity of the situation he believes " England will pull through and carry on. There is in the English character still an intuitive, inarticulate wisdom. In spite of all the modifications caused by war, there is a solid common sense, a sense of compromise and the middle way, which belongs to centuries of English tradition and is not yet deadened. The passion of the extremists leaves the main body of English men and women cold as ice. Discontent, distress, exasperation, lead to violent speech but rarely to violent action within the heart of England untouched by the fire of the Celtic fringe. In the past centuries there have been worse times than now, but people have suffered them with patience, with hard resolution, with high and noble valour. They have always taken the

\* Speech on St. George's Day, 1920.

middle way. I think they will now. Out of present trouble England will emerge with her old spirit of stolidity, resource, and energy. If not, then other people will be hurt grievously. If England go down in decay, so will all Europe, and even America will not be scathless."

## II

One day, returning from Germany at the close of the war, I saw in a Sussex lane a fair and stalwart Englishman of the very type of whom sang the bard of *Beowulf*—the living replica of ancestors whose bones are interred in their thousands on the Sussex downs. As it was written of one in Egbert's day, that "the Britons regarded him as an Englishman of England," so are he and a million like him "Englishmen of England," yet undiluted in blood, surrounded by an alien horde of "Britons," ruled by alien forces, and beset by alien influences and institutions which it is no longer in his power to bend to his will or adapt to his English nature. For it is to him and his like that England owes what she has been and the gifts she has made to the world.

And my mind went back four years, to when, in another lane, in Picardy, I watched the men of the 37th (English) Division moving on in serried ranks to battle. It needed but

little effort of the fancy to see in these sturdy, good-natured warriors a reincarnation of the bluff warriors of the folk moot, the bowman of Agincourt and Cressy, the pikemen led by Fairfax, and the red-coated fusiliers who, in far India, followed Clive. There was a buoyancy in their gait, a curious stern competence in their ruddy, smiling faces, as of workmen who are tackling a familiar job—a job they had been called out for a thousand years from their fields and workshops to do—a job they could do better than any who were not English. And so without tremor or gesture they passed on into the line—like a pageant of martial England—and were swallowed up. One more thing that was purely English had perished.

Thinking of that episode of War and that unit of the British Army, I entered the neighbouring Sussex village. Was it really nothing at all that the chief landowners hereabouts—as I was told—should be an American of Continental descent and a Jewish millionaire; that three of the five names of the shop signs should be Scotch; that the goods purveyed therein should be American, Swiss, Danish, Irish, Australian, Argentine, and what not; that the landlord of the Royal George should be an Irishman; that the drinks advertised for sale therein were Scotch, Irish, French; and that the newspaper which came down from London to tell these English

villagers of the loss of Ireland should be produced by Scotchmen, Irishmen, Americans and Jews? Perhaps. For it may be that cosmopolitanism is the rule of the age, and that only a Colonial Englishman is sensitive to—is affected by—these examples of racial dilution which have come to be accepted as inevitable by the Englishman of England.

\* \* \* \*

For it is hard to make the English understand. England—her soil and substance—is safe. Nothing, short of devastating foreign invasion or geographical convulsion, can destroy her inalienable charm.

The late Lord Avebury years ago wrote a book on *The Scenery of England and the Causes to which it was due*. He dwelt on the beauty of the land, the hedgerows in spring, the clean, winding roads and shaven lawns, the influences of climate, tillage, and long settlement. This is the objective England that the world sees.

“Over all which vision of a secular decay, nature still flings the splendour of her dawns and sunsets upon a land of radiant beauty. Here are deep rivers flowing beneath old mills and churches; high-roofed red barns and large thatched houses, with still unsullied expanses of cornland and wind-swept moor and heather, and pine woods looking down valleys upon green gardens, and long stretches of

quiet down standing white and clean from the blue surrounding sea. Never, perhaps, in the memorable and spacious story of this island's history has the land beyond the city offered so fair an inheritance to the children of its people as to-day, under the visible shadow of the end." \*

We of the Colonies, who are English, will soon have, in turn, only our traditions, for the English amongst us are also slowly being hemmed in and absorbed by the Scotch, Irish, Germans, Scandinavians, and the other races. When the England of the English passes, we shall have no national home to follow, no true racial sanctuary.

Feudal England is dead, and the aristocratic system is passing slowly away. Into whose hands, then, is the sceptre of Empire to be transmitted? Democracy has become established, and the British working classes have the largest share in the Government.

Is Labour fitted for the task? What the old Imperial nation wants is—*direction*. Is it conceivable that amongst these crude minds and perverted characters a masterful direction is possible? Are here to be found the "slowly developed, instructive observance of order; the social sense, good manners, traditions of scholarship and urbanity"?

Labour clamours to rule and to possess—

\* C. F. Masterman : *The Condition of England*.

forgetful that the manual workers once ruled and possessed the world, in those far-off days when there was no learning, no culture, no manners ; and that it took many centuries of development to evolve the despised "gentleman." Labour ruled the world, and what a world it was ! And what a world it is where, far across Europe, we descry the "workers" enthroned !

In the time now close at hand, those of us overseas who still cling passionately to the old land, the old code, the old ethos, will see our children merged into "Britishers," into "Canadians," "Australians," that is to say, a mixture of all the races of the earth—even as you of England will be—even as the Englishman of New England has been, without the strength and consolation of that racial integrity which has been the pride, the hope, and the salvation of the Jews.

For us, our only safe course is to endeavour to keep our Englishism as long as we can, to do what our forefathers did—teach our children the *English* faith, train them in the old *English* code, read them daily the *English* litany, and then, perhaps, in the process of ages, to a little England, the England conceived by William Morris—an England purified and transfigured, as the Jews to Judæa, a handful of her children will return to realize at last the dreams of centuries, when the scattered remnants of the little proud English race will

**foregather once more round the great High  
Altar in the long-Promised Land.**

**In thee the spirit of old England lives.  
The glory of the past in thee is wrought  
By all the sacrifice of blood and tears,  
By all the broken hearts and lives laid down,  
By all the glory and all the pain.**

**You—you are not of us. Our Land may fall  
Into your hands—Her Spirit, never!**

**THE END**





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